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OBJECTIVE: TO BUILD SECULAR STATE IN MULTI-RELIGIOUS INDIA
STRATEGY: TO DEFEND SECULARISM FROM THE CHARGE OF SAFFRON BRIGADE
TACTICS: TO SUPPORT THE STRONGEST CANDIDATE AGAINST BJP IN EACH CONSTITUENCY

National Context

The Indian people stand today, on the eve of the 11th General Election, at a critical point in their history. The moment of truth has come, the time to harvest what we have sown, knowingly or unknowingly, over the last 5 decades of independence. As a nation-State we appear to have lost the sense of direction. We do not even realise fully what is at stake today. Shall the country survive the collision between the forces of communalism and the forces of secularism? Shall the citadel of democracy fall to the assault by the fascist forces? Shall the economy be inundated by the multinationals? Shall the country remain united? Shall our national culture be distorted and deformed by the West cultural invasion? Shall the country be buried under the joint burden of mounting debt and rampant corruption? Shall the parallel black money economy thriving on Corruption, Criminalisation and Consumerism overtake and pass by the masses and obliterate our national duty to give a life of dignity to every citizen, to meet his basic needs as a human being? Shall violence raise its ugly head in every town and city, in every lane and by-lane?

When the law and order breaks down, when graft and nepotism reign supreme, when 'sifarish' and 'pairvi' prevail, when executive discretion is used for the enrichment of the chosen few, the lower strata, the weaker sections, the minorities at every level (who have little representation in the power structure or the economic system or the political order) are bound to suffer. Their elite may prosper, hands in glove with their co-elites in our plural society but the burden is bound to fall on the common man in general and the Shudras, the Dalits, the Adivasis and the Muslims, in particular, who are yet to inhale the full breath of freedom.

Election: Lamp of Hope

Every election raises hopes of a better government, of a fresh breeze, of a New Deal; But what the people have experienced is a steady fall in standards of public life and in government's accountability to the people. They have seen a steady fuzzing of the line of demarcation between democracy and authoritarianism, between communalism and secularism, between socialism and elitism; they have seen the gap widening between social groups, among the States, in the same state among districts and among Panchayats in the same district. Inequality and injustice stamp our society at every level, in every sense. Use of force and coercion, violence have become our normal method for settling conflicts of interest, even of ideas. Judiciary which has

just begun to assert itself is still largely confined to its ivory tower with occasional glimpses of the ground realities. The Executive and its operative machinery the Bureaucracy are largely concerned with wringing the last drop of juice from the orange of power, of blood from the famished skeletons of the people. Legislatures have been reduced to rubber stamps of the Executive, powerless in writing legislation or formulating policies as in controlling the Executive.

What is needed, therefore, is a basic change but who has the time to think, while the going is good and before the sky collapses?

So the biggest democracy in the world shall have another general election, with the largest electorate in the world, to decide which party or group of parties shall exercise power for the next 5 years, hopefully. Though a sense of frustration and disillusionment pervades the air, yet there is no option but to try to make the best of this opportunity.

Demons in Competition

Three demons are competing to possess the soul of the nation and we have to decide, not between the greater and the lesser evil but between the evil, the greater evil, and the greatest evil.

The choice will vary from voter to voter, from constituency to constituency, from region to region and perhaps from community to community, for we are still a segmented society, a fractured polity, a fragmented economy, a divided house.

Criteria for Choice

The choice will depend upon our perception of the system, our articulation of deeply felt aspirations, our lingering hope, our priorities.

Many people may vote for the candidate who is likely to improve the local environment, in its physical as well as social sense, get roads built, schools and health centres established, bridges constructed and industries set up. And what is most important, find jobs for the jobless, the educated unemployed youth.

Quest of Equality and Justice

There is a rising expectation among the masses: that the legislator, shall secure due share of the development resources - national, state and district - for his constituency. Whether the system will be oriented equally to serve all the people, all the villages and towns of our vast country, despite their changing social demography is one question. The more important question is whether the legislator shall care only for those communities, those villages and towns even those tolas whose votes helped,

him win. Increasingly the legislators tick off the others - who have equal claims on the resources and on their energy - by saying 'well, you did not vote for me? Why have you come to me?'

Scarcity of resources has turned bias and prejudice into the working norms and social groups which form a 'minority' at any operational level invariably suffer deprivation.

So, there is a natural desire in every community/social group to be represented in the legislature, in the political executive, in the administration, in the judiciary, in the professions

Political parties are, therefore, going to be judged by the relative representation of various social groups in their list, by the choice of candidates (representatives or symbolic, worthless, tokens!) as well as the selection of constituencies for candidates from minority groups. Secondly, they are also likely to be judged by selection of parties for alliance, adjustment or understanding. Thirdly, they are likely to be judged also by the political priorities reflected in their Programmes of Action.

Muslim Indians and Political Process

The Muslim Indians should shake off frustration, get over their disappointments and look forward to coming election with a new hope. Yes, the Babari Masjid stands demolished with no possibility of its reconstruction in the near future. But a former P.M. did lament that the three domes of the demolished Masjid represented the three domes of the Constitution: the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary. And the case is still subjudice. Yes, the criminals of Bombay, Bhopal and Bhagalpur and hundreds of other places, have not yet been punished. But the overall incidence of 'communal violence' has sharply gone down. Yes, the Muslim youth are still being deprived of their due share in public employment and higher education and the Muslim localities of their due share of educational institutions. But the political system is resounding with echoes of their just and legitimate demand for Reservation. Yes, the Shariat remains under threat. But even the Left is beginning to see the difference between imposition of an alien code in the name of uniformity and the need for social reform within an acceptable framework. Yes, the mass media, at least a section thereof, continues to heap insults, to incite hatred and to promote prejudice. But the enlightened section increasingly appreciates the fact of continuing deprivation and the legitimacy of our struggle for equality. Yes, the Muslim Indians continue to be identified with Pakistan and the Kashmiri insurgents. Yet there are sign of goodwill and fraternisation.

So all is not lost. The Holy Quran directs the Muslims to endeavour, with patience and forbearance and with the faith that ultimately the 'Haq' (truth and justice)

will prevail.

Sp this election is the Moment of Truth - the opportunity to look onward and to look inward, to define oneself, to recognise others, to make a deliberate choice, to act.....

Common Secular Objective: Stop Hindutva Rath

For a meaningful political analysis, the Muslim Indians have first to decide their political objective in this election, which is nothing more nor less than to **stop the Hindutva Rath from storming into the Red Fort** - whether the charioteer is Advani or Vajpayee! In other words, to **defeat the BJP candidate, whatever the mask he may wear, whatever promises he may make, whatever language he may speak.**

To defeat the BJP which is the agent of Hindu Communalism, the secular voters have to **choose the candidate who can win.** They cannot afford to disperse or fritter away their votes (as they did in Maharashtra in 1995).

Not Much Choice Between Congress and JD-LF

Generally there are two alternatives: the JD-LF and the Congress. There is not much to choose between them. They both profess faith in Secularism; they both promise protection of the rights of the religious and linguistic minorities but neither has an unblemished record. If Congress killed the Gopal Singh Panel's report, the JD-LF Government gave it a State burial. If the Congress reduced the Secular order to a system of tokens and balances, a regime of inaction, the other did no better; if Congress colluded with the Sangh Parivar in demolishing the Babari Masjid, the JD or the LF took no preventive action or launched any agitation. On the other hand, one recalls the freedom and official media build-up to Advani when he rode his Rath to rouse the Hindu sentiments. Communal massacres have gone unpunished in JD-ruled Bihar; Muslim youth have received short shrift in CPI(M) ruled W. Bengal and tortured under TADA in Congress ruled Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Muslim Indians are not the bonded labour of, or under any obligation to, any political party to vote for it across the country or to any political personality, be it Narasimha Rao or V.P. Singh or Chandra Shekhar, Laloo Prasad, Mulayam Singh or Deve Gowda, Jaya Lalitha, Jyoti Basu or Naidu. But since angels will not come down from the heavens, the choice is limited. At the same time, they cannot afford to reject any party which at least professes Secularism. So **they should vote in a given constituency for the viable, winnable candidate of any secular party/formation who can take on and defeat the BJP candidate, even if he wears a Sherwani and sports a beard!**

The non-Congress secular parties could have formed a Front; they did not. The Congress could have done

something concrete to atone for the sin of collusion and the crime of negligence, since 6 December 1992, and the failure to heal the wounds to the Muslim psyche. It did not. In this election, to defeat the BJP, both should have come to a gentlemanly understanding so that they do not decimate each other while the BJP Rath passes through. But they did not.

Make Independent Choice In each Constituency

For Muslim Indians and for other secular voters there can be no common choice for this vast country - as a whole. The playground differ; the players differ, the rules differ, even the stakes differ. No party or alliance is equally entrenched all over. Muslim population itself is not spread uniformly throughout the country. 75% of the Muslims live in 132 out of our 450 districts in the country; 80% in 7 States/UTs out of a total of 30.

Therefore, the choice has to vary from region to region, from state to state, from constituency to constituency. Anyway, Muslim Indians are not a vote bank for any party to draw upon.

What the Government did not, what the Parties did not, the secular masses have to, in order to save the country's future and to protect the vital interests.

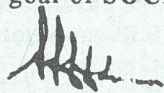
Without fear or favour, rejecting the pleas of the vote brokers hired by various parties, cutting out all emotions or sentiments, the Muslim Indians, if they are to survive with honour and dignity and to help the country to survive as a nation-state and as a civil society, have

- * To analyse the political situation in EACH constituency
- * To identify the winnable secular candidate in that constituency, and
- * To vote unitedly and massively for him, so that their choice wins.

Support Strongest Secular Candidate to Defeat BJP

Muslim Indians and all other secular voters in each Constituency must adopt **TACTICAL VOTING** and support the strongest candidate against the BJP, irrespective of party, religion or caste or language or race.

Once the BJP, which is today looming larger than life on the political horizon of the country, is cut down to size, a secular government is bound to emerge, hopefully with new blood and new ideas and with a new determination to take the country back from the precipice of **Communalism, Consumerism, Corruption, Criminalisation and Conflict**, back to an environment of Peace and Harmony, back on the road of Progress and Development for All, towards the goal of **SOCIAL JUSTICE**.



New Delhi
1 April, 1996

(SYED SHAHABUDDIN)



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LOK SABHA: MUSLIM CONCENTRATION SEATS 1952-1991

State	State % of Total Muslim Population	Muslim % of State Population	No. of Lok Sabha Seats	Due Share	Actual 1991	Names of Potential Constituencies
AP	5.7	8.91	42	4	3	Secunderabad(6), Hanamkonda(4), Hyderabad(4), Warrangal(3), Nalgonda(2), Kurnool(1), Guntur(1), Anantpur(1), Gudappah Dhubri(6), Barpeta(4), Jorhat(1) Kaliabar(1), Kokrajhar (1)
Assam	5.6	28.43	14	4	1	Mangaldoi(1), Silchar, Naogaon Kishanganj(8), Siwan(5), Katihar (3), Gindih(3), Kadarma(3), Godda(2), Gopalganj(2), Madhubani(2), Purnea (2), Betuah (2), Darbhanga(2), Motihari(1) Bhagalpur, W. Champaran Chandni Chowk(1)
Bihar	12.5	14.81	54	8	6	Broach(2), Ahmedabad(1), Kutch Surat, Godhara Faridabad(4)
Delhi	0.6	8	7	1	NIL	Anantnag(10), Baramula(10)
Gujarat	3.6	8.73	26	2	NIL	Srinagar (10), Ladakh (1), Jammu Bangalore(N)(5), Chitradurga(2) Bidar(1), Dharwar(S)(1), Kanakpur(1), Shimoga(1), Bijapur, Gulbarga, Raichur, Mysore Calicut(4), Chirayital(3), Manjeri (6), Ponnani(6), Palghat(1), Betul(4), Bhopal(2), Vidisha(2), Satna(1), Hoshangabad(1), Indore Akola(3), Washim(2), Jalana(1), Chandrapur(1), Bombay SE(1), Aurangabad(1), Kolaba, Thane, Nagpur, Pune, Ratnagiri, Raigarh, Nanded, Amravati, Bombay(S), Bombay(N), Bombay (NW), Malegaon, Jalgaon
Haryana	0.6	4.64	10	NIL	NIL	Jhunjhun(2), Bikaner, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Churu, Bamer, Ajmer Vellore(3), Mayuram(2), Penkya-
J&K	4.8	64.18	6	4	VACANT	kulam(2), Dindigal(1), Palani(1), Ramanathpura(1), Trichy(1), Madras, Tirunelveli
Karnataka	5.1	11.64	28	3	2	Rampur(8), Moradabad(7), Meerut (5), Amroha(4), Saharanpur(4), Bahraich(4), Unnao (4), Kairana (4), Mirzapur(4), Bulandshahr(3), Muzaffarnagar(3), Badaun(2), Bareilly(2), Ghazipur(2), Hapur(2) Domariaganj(2), Fatehpur (2), Balanpur(1), Bijnore(SC)(1), Hardoi(1), Jalsar(1), Jaunpur(1), Kanpur(1), Maharajganj(1), Pilibhit(1), Sambhal(1), Sultanpur (1), Shahjahanpur, Gonda, Shahabad, Khalilabad, Janjipore(9), Basirhal(4), Raiganj(4), Katwa(4), Uluberia(4) Malda(4), Murshidabad(4), Dum Dum(2), Howrah(2)
Kerala	6.8	23.33	20	5	2	Lakshadweep
MP	3.1	4.96	40	1	1	Pondicherry
Maharashtra	7.3	9.67	48	5	1	State Figures with brackets indicate the number of occasions when a Muslim represented the Constituency).
Rajasthan	3.1	8.01	25	2	1	
Tamil Nadu	3.2	5.47	39	2	1	
U.P.	22.2	17.33	85	15	3	
W. Bengal	14.7	23.61	42	10	5	
Lakshadweep		94.31	1	1	1	
Pondicherry		6.54	1	NIL	1	

Electoral Report of BJP

Out of Fuel

Editorial, The Times of India, 20 March, 1996

The BJP may think up any number of ingenious explanations for forcing an abrupt change in a programme that was devised advertised and marketed as a key feature of its election campaign but none of it is likely to wash with the public at large... But it is clear as daylight that Mr. Advani's about - turn has a lot more to do with the lucklustre response he drew on his yatra, including in BJP-ruled states...

The BJP has surely seen happier times. In the last year or so it has been in the public glare for all the wrong reasons. First Gujarat made nonsense of its claim to be a cut above the rest. Then came news from state after state of power struggles and factional wars.

The final, knock-out blow arrived in the form of a CBI chargesheet against Mr. Advani, the party's conscience-keeper and victory mascot. That hawala has stumped the party's much-nurtured middle-class urban constituency... It is far from clear how the party wants itself projected...

It is the party's case that it is morally superior to its peers, that it is committed to delivering su-raaj (good government)... It was only months ago, after its suicidal dalliance with the BSP, that it had sworn never to enter into mismatched alliances... Such being the current state of affairs in a party which once basked in its isolation, it is hardly surprising that Mr. Advani's second yatra has turned out to be a pale imitation of his hugely successful Ram rath yatra.

BJP: Not Yatras but Alliances

... The BJP's strategy of trying to rope in as many of the small parties and groups like the Chandrashekhar-George Fernandes combine for... Bihar, the Bansi Lal-led Haryana Vikas Manch in Haryana... and the Akali Dal in Punjab is being interpreted by political circles here in two ways.

One is that the party is making this effort as it might not be confident about winning a majority and forming the government at the Centre on its own. It might be thinking that in the event of a hung Parliament, these supporting groups could help it come to power. The other is that the BJP thinks it will win a majority and would like a broad front of anti-Congress forces on its side in the next Lok Sabha.

Shailendra Mahato's quitting the membership of the BJP has also created an awkward situation...

(Source: The Times of India)

BJP's Retreat

Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 20 Mar, 96

The Bharatiya Janata Party has begun to betray signs of weakness and it is on the defensive... Its decision to "suspend" party president L.K. Advani's "Su-raaj" Rath Yatra is mainly to rescue itself... from the embarrassing situation arising from the poor public response... Unlike his Ayodhya yatra... his latest exercise has turned out to be flop. Forget the southern States, but even in Gujarat and Maharashtra where the party is considered to be strong, the yatra has not evoked much public enthusiasm...

Any political weapons will become blunt if it is frequently used and yatras by leaders are bound to lose their effectiveness... Moreover, after the charge-sheets... Advani no longer remains on the pedestal.

The stars do not seem to be favouring the BJP... The Mahto episode has brought disgrace to the party. To make things worse, there has also been no sign of the factional squabbles in the Gujarat unit of the party subsiding. In Maharashtra, the people are getting more and more disillusioned with the BJP-Shiv Sena Government... It is not too late for the party to at least set its house in order. Since its rivals are no angels, it can still give them a tough fight at the hustings.

BJP's Cup of Woes

Editorial, The Pioneer, 20 March, 1996

... In contrast to the earlier yatra, Mr. Advani did not have an aggressive Hindutva to peddle because the attempts of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) to incite people's religious passions and foment trouble over the issue of reclaiming the Idgah mosque at Mathura and Gyanvapi mosque at Varanasi have not met with much success. Moreover, after the demolition of the disputed Babari-Masjid structure, most Hindus have come to realise the enormous folly of similar acts. Second, howsoever hard Mr. Advani may try to put up a brave face, the fact that the CBI has found a prima facie case to file chargesheets against him in the hawala case has certainly made a dent in his so far absolutely clean image... The hawala case has taken away some of the BJP president's aura.

It was naturally bound to result in declining popularity of Mr. Advani...

The BJP's tale of woes does not stop here... Mr. Mahato has ... resigned from the BJP. While his own credibility is quite low, he has certainly made the BJP look utterly ridiculous.

Ahtesham Qureshy on the Muslim Voters Mood

Voting for Candidates, Not Parties, to Safeguard Their Future

The coming Lok Sabha elections are... of particular importance for Muslims, who... will determine the fortunes of political parties and candidates in a large number of constituencies...

The newly sharpened focus on ... corruption among top political leaders... would no doubt influence the mind of the average Muslim voter too. But, for him, the uppermost consideration is the future of the community, its economic prosperity, and the preservation of its social, cultural and religious identity. Concern for physical security, or lack of security, has now become a secondary factor. This is the change in the Muslim psyche brought about after the demolition of the Babari Masjid in December, 1992.

For one, there is no change in the anti-Congress mood of the Muslims in the northern, southern and western states. In fact, the alienation has only widened. It is not just the demolition of the Babari Masjid. The community has overcome the shock... The real question is the overall credibility of the Congress as a party which has been in power for about 47 years, and the common Muslim view is that the party has betrayed the confidence and support it had enjoyed.

For the post-partition Muslims - which is more than 50 per cent of the population - the highest attraction is for social justice and tangible benefits which promise to flow from reservation of opportunities for the backward classes... The consideration is economic upliftment of the economically and educationally backward community. The inspiration obviously came from the Mandal Commission and its recommendations for the reservation of jobs in public service and of seats in educational institutions.

It is largely because of the frustration with the Congress and new attraction for the concept of reservation that the Muslims feel a gravitational pull towards the "third force", comprising the Janata Dal, Samajwadi Party of Mulayam Singh, the CPI and CPI-M... The support will of course vary from region to region or state to state. In Assam, for example... the choice might be difficult. There the ethnic strife and the contentious issue of "migrants" have been vital for the minority community...

There is an emerging group of people who do not want bulk support for any one political party or combination or alliance. They advocate "picking-and-choosing" of a candidate, irrespective of the political party to which he or she might belong. This new core group of politically conscious people, who want to shun publicity and propaganda, would quietly visit carefully

selected parliamentary constituencies... and make an assessment of the various candidates in the poll arena. This group will then commend to the voters a candidate who in its view would serve the community and its cause better in Parliament. The object is to experiment with individuals, and not political parties. It is also intended to boost the prospects of the "winning horses" to pave the way for a large presence of Muslim members in the new Lok Sabha.

Another interesting feature of the 1996 parliamentary elections is that the Muslim community does not suffer from the complex of having no leadership. New leaders have been thrown up by local or state situations during the recent panchayat and municipal elections in the country. However, both P.V. Narasimha Rao and V.P. Singh have been contacting Muslim intellectuals and religious scholars like Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi... But Ali Mian has consistently avoided speaking on political matters... Abdullah Bukhari of Delhi has lost his appeal - in whatever limited way it was exploited at the 1991 polls. ...

In terms of pure electoral strategy, leaders of the community are quite clear that the split of Muslim vote should be avoided at all costs. This is what was done at the recent Panchayat polls in UP... The experiment done in Maharashtra... may not be repeated in view of the anti-Muslim steps taken by the Manohar Joshi government during the one year of power. Small parties like the Muslim League would have no relevance at the polls, except in Kerala... The Congress on its part might try to exploit organisations of Imams in certain states... The BSP in UP is... a residuary, so far as the Muslim support is concerned. (Source: The Hindustan Times, 21 March, 1996)

Kuldip Nayar

On BJP and Congress Poll Prospects

There is no revival of congress in the country. Nor is there any vibration, much less a wave, in favour of the Bharatiya Janata Party. All that has happened is that the sharpness of dissensions in Congress has lessened and the dust raised by the revolt in the BJP in Gujarat has settled down. But neither of the two parties looks like winning even one-third of the 544 Lok Sabha seats. ...

With Congress and the BJP out of reckoning - the BJP will get more seats than Congress - a combination of all-India and regional political parties look like assuming power at the Centre. Congress may try to join that government. But I see no likelihood of the BJP coming to power, not even indirectly by making any other party a stalking horse. (Source: The Nation and the World)

CPI(M): Manifesto for Lok Sabha Election, 1996 (Relevant Extracts)

The Communal Danger

Never since the partition of the country, have the communal forces mounted such an offensive as has been witnessed during the last five years. Violating all assurances to the National Integration Council, Supreme Court and to the people the BJP went ahead and organised the dastardly demolition of the Babari Masjid. This was followed by a period of worst social instability with large scale spread of communal riots, wanton killings and destruction of property. The BJP brazenly defended this action. In order to consolidated the communal forces it struck an alliance with the rabid communal and chauvinist Shiv Sena in Maharashtra.

During these five years, the BJP sought to project itself as a responsible opposition claiming to be a party with a difference. On each of the planks, it has been exposed before the people. With great fanfare it announced adherence to its policy of "Swadeshi" and even promised the electorate before the assembly elections in Maharashtra that it would cancel the dubious deal with Enron and in fact expel the MNC from the country. But as things have turned out it has not only renegotiated with Enron but has in fact facilitated greater penetration of the multinational corporation in our power sector. On every other matter of importance, policy prescription, it has gone along with the Congress(I) in introducing this policy of unbridled liberalisation that is undermining the economic sovereignty of our country. Its state governments pursue the same policies leading to the worsening of people's living conditions.

It had projected itself as a party with a different culture distinct from the self-seeking politicians and opportunistic elements that have gathered in the Congress. However, the whole exercise in Gujarat and the internal bickering in the Party in other states where it is in power have shown that its leadership is also replete with people of the same culture as that of the Congress whose self seeking opportunism precedes the interests of the country.

Similarly, with its highest leadership involved in the hawala scandal it has shown itself as a party that is no different from the Congress as far as looting the country is concerned.

With this track record, the communal forces in the recent period once again seek to mount an offensive spreading deeper the poison of hatred against the minorities in order to garner more votes. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad has issued a blue print for Hindu Rashtra while whipping up the campaign for the destruction of the mosques in Kashi and Mathura. The other outfits of the RSS are also active in organising various activities towards this end. Its state government in Maharashtra has abolished the Minorities Commission. It also wound up

the Srikrishna Commission enquiring into the Bombay riots, brazenly patronising criminal communal elements.

Defeat BJP - Defeat Communal Forces

In the background of these developments and considering the fact that the BJP had emerged in the last elections as the major opposition in parliament and in power in four state legislatures, it still represents the most consolidated danger to the very unity and integrity of our country. It is out to destroy the very social fabric that composes India. It is therefore necessary that this communal challenge be squarely met with and that these forces be defeated in the coming elections. ...

... It becomes imperative for every patriot to defeat the Congress and the BJP and in their place elect Left secular, democratic candidates to the 11th Lok Sabha so that India can be saved today in order to change it for the better tomorrow.

Election Programme

... Implementation of reservations for scheduled castes/scheduled tribes and backward classes. Within reservation for OBCs implement creamy layer principle so that needy sections are benefitted most. If vacancies exist after application of creamy layer criteria then they should be filled up by candidates from within the same communities. Reservation to be extended to Christians from converted scheduled castes. ...

Strengthen Secularism

Immediate legislation separating religion from politics.

Transfer of all cases connected with the Ayodhya dispute to the supreme court under article 138(2) for a speedy verdict which will be binding on all sides.

Strict implementation of the status quo of religious places as of 15th August, 1947.

Protection of just rights of the minorities; implement the provisions of the constitution to prevent discrimination; strengthening security of the life and property of the minorities; backwards amongst the minorities be given OBC reservations; protection of Urdu language.

... Decentralisation of democracy to the grassroot; proper devolution of power to the panchayats; strengthen panchayat raj institutions; financial assistance to panchayats to flow through state governments.

Immediate announcement of political solution for the Kashmir problem which must include defence of Article 370 and a review of the erosion which has taken place since 1953 by the elected state assembly; granting maximum autonomy within the framework of the Indian constitution; compensation and adequate measures for those displaced from the state and a comprehensive economic package for development, generating employment opportunities.

CPI: Election Manifesto, 1996 (Revelant Extracts)

BJP is No Alternative; It is Nowhere Near Power

The BJP has been loudly claiming to be the 'party in waiting', the alternative to the Congress. But its claims have come a cropper. Much before the polls, it stands thoroughly exposed.

With an eye on power, it took recourse to out and out communal propaganda, distorting the humane essence of religion and is misusing religion for garnering votes. In an act of medieval frenzy it demolished a place of worship. Its action stirred up communal hate and poison on both sides that led to a spurt of riots and took hundreds of innocent lives.

It has attempted to put up a new face by talking of 'cultural nationalism'. But getting desperate after corruption and inner dissension caught up with it, the BJP has started openly espousing the so-called 'Hindu Agenda' of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Every single element of the BJP's cultural nationalism is aimed against the minorities, and is a denial of the pluralism and multifacetedness of Indian society and culture, which is the basis of our secularism. ...

In Maharashtra, the BJP-Shiv Sena government unceremoniously wound up the States Minorities Commission and the Srikrishna Commission. It withdrew 1500 cases filed under the Prevention of Atrocities (Against Scheduled Castes) Act. All these expose the BJP and its allies' ingrained hostility to minorities and dalits... **Country Needs a Real Third Alternative**

What the country needs today is a functioning government at the Centre - a broad coalition of left, secular and democratic parties and forces which will keep both the Congress and the BJP away from power...

The CPI and the left has consistently fought against all brands of communalism and upheld our best traditions of humanism, tolerance and brotherhood. The CPI and the left have made tremendous sacrifices for defending national unity against all divisive and separatist forces. ...

The CPI will work for the victory of such a "Third Alternative"...

Jobs for All: Expansion of educational and employment opportunities for the youth. Enshrine right to work as a fundamental right in the Constitution and provide unemployment dole. Evolve a comprehensive youth policy which takes into account the right to work and education.

Education for all: Free and compulsory education for all citizens upto the age of 14 with training in productive skills. While charitable institutions and private societies have an important part to play in the educational field, oppose privatisation and commercialisation of education. Six per cent of the GNP to be allocated for education.

SC, ST, Women etc.: We stand for firm defence at the rights of the SC, ST, backward classes, minority communities, women, children and other weaker sections. The policy of reservation must be fully implemented. Efforts must be made to extend reservation to private sector... The BJP-VHP stand that, "the rights and privileges accorded to SC and STs will be withdrawn on

their conversion" will be firmly opposed...

Defence of Democratic Rights: Repeal of all undemocratic and repressive laws. Defence of democratic rights and civil liberties. Reform and overhaul of the police forces.

Defence of our Pluralist Culture: Democratic and secular cultural policies incorporating the humanist and tolerant teachings of the social reformers shall be pursued. The pluralist character of our great culture shall be upheld.

Ideological and cultural invasion threatening our traditional cultural, moral and literacy values shall be resisted. The drive to spread feudal and unscientific ideas, obscurantism, mysticism, superstitions, obscenity, glorification of crimes and violence shall be rebuffed.

Language: All languages shall be encouraged to develop as modern languages, and due recognition given to the rights of Urdu and Sindhi under Article 345 or 347 of the Constitution.

Secularism: Defence of secularism as the basic tenet of our Constitution, from attacks by all brands of communal forces.

Effective intervention of secular forces and administration in the fight against communalism, so that the people belonging to the minority communities can feel sense of security. At the same time, giving priority to the genuine grievances of the minority community regarding discrimination in the matter of jobs and other economic spheres, more avenues for education, end to the mismanagement of wakf properties etc. All cases related with Ram temple-Babri Masjid dispute shall be referred to Supreme Court under Article 138(2) and its decision shall be binding.

Restructuring Centre-State Relations: Centre-State relations should be restructured in the true spirit of federalism, giving greater powers and financial resources to states, as recommended by the Sarkaria Commission...

Real decentralisation to be carried out by conferring more power and financial resources to elected bodies at district, block and panchayat levels.

Defend Article 370 of the Constitution in relation to J&K, and rectify the erosion that has taken place in it. Evolve an economic and political package on the basis of consensus among all national and state parties.

Electoral Reforms: Electoral reforms must be carried out comprehensively and not piecemeal.. The Representation of Peoples Act should be amended to: i) curb money and muscle power, ii) ensure state funding specially in the form of necessary election material, iii) enforce model code which bans communal propaganda and appeal for votes in the name of religion...

Positive and active role to be played for developing South Cooperation between all developing countries, and extending cooperation among the SAARC countries. ...

Only the democratic, left and secular forces, acting together, can lead the people to a new order capable of defending our economic and political independence based on social justice for all.

Situation Report of Assam

Based on Hindustan Times and Indian Express

The resurgent Asom Gana Parishad has launched a massive offensive against the ruling Congress led by Chief Minister Hiteswar Saikia in a bid to wrest power in the forthcoming elections to the Assam Legislative Assembly.

The AGP has formed a four-party alliance with the CPI, CPI-M and the Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC)... In the outgoing State Assembly, the AGP had 19 seats, the CPI four, the CPI-M two and the ASDC four seats.

After the merger of the AGP with the Natun Assam Gana Parishad of the AGP led by former State Home Minister Bhriku Phukan which had won five seats, the tally of the unified AGP soared to 24, emerging as the leading Opposition party in the State.

The Congress had 65 seats in the State Assembly, as a result of pro-Congress wave... in 1991... The BJP, riding on the Hindutva sentiments had emerged as the third largest party in the State with 10 seats, mostly in the constituencies bordering Bangladesh where the Hindu sentiments against migrant... Muslims ran considerably.

Given this scenario, all the political parties are hoping to make major gains in one other's traditional bastions, especially the AGP-led four-party alliance and the BJP which is going it alone in the forthcoming polls both to the State Assembly as well as the Lok Sabha...

The BJP ... has taken the issue of illegal migrants from Bangladesh as its poll issue, put on the back-burners now by the AGP which had swept to power on the same issue in 1986.

At the other end of the electoral spectrum are a bunch of small parties which have formed a 10-party alliance under the leadership of Congress-S president Sarat Chandra Sinha, former Chief Minister of Assam (called) the Left Democratic Alliance(LDA)...

... The 10-party alliance is expected to primarily eat into the vote banks of the AGP.

For minimising this, the LDA is seeking seat adjustments with the four-party alliance led by the AGP...

Though there were hopes of the Bodo issue being resolved through tripartite talks in Delhi with Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and Union Home Minister S.B. Chavan in recent days, these hopes have receded after the announcement of polls by the Election Commission on March 19.

Opposition parties, however, are apprehensive that a secret understanding may emerge from the tripartite talks with the Bodo leaders to give the Congress chance again for forming a Government in the state. All eyes therefore are trained on the outcome of the decision of the Bodos, expected to be taken on March 23 when they may announce a newly-unified Bodo political group to contest polls.

The AGP has already begun its exercise of taking the Bodos into confidence over the contentious land issue. The AGP leaders are keeping their fingers crossed that the Congress loss may well turn out to their electoral gains.

The BJP is quietly doing its work in the border areas along the Indo-Bangladesh international borders and is expected to make gains even in constituencies adjoining the border constituencies which are Congress bastions, especially in Brahmaputra Valley areas in lower Assam.

The predicament of the Congress can be assessed by the Chief Minister Hiteswar Saikia's decision to contest from two constituencies, namely Dispur and his home constituency of Nazira in Sibsagar district, respectively.

Nobody is taken in by the Assam Congress party president's statement that he is merely bowing to the wishes of his party workers by contesting from Dispur.

The Congress and the AGP have admitted independently that considerable violence would be expected during the forthcoming polls to the State Assembly.

Already Mr. Saikia has begun to accuse the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) of committing violent acts to undermine the prospects of the ruling party. He has charged the banned insurgent outfit with threatening various Congress leaders with dire consequences allegedly in a bid to discourage them from taking part in the polls.

The AGP, on the other hand, has accused the Congress of driving a wedge in the original All Assam Students Union (AASU) which led to a breakaway group forming the ULFA. The AGP has also accused the Congress of utilising the services of the surrendered ULFA cadres (SULFA) to intimidate contestants of the AGP and other parties.

While Mr. Saikia justifies the need to conduct polls with the helps of the Army and para-military forces, Mr. Mahanta claims that the security forces would deter genuine AGP supporters from turning out at polling booths in large numbers.

Notwithstanding these accusations, both the prominent parties are aware that the forthcoming polls to the Assembly would be keenly contested.

... Multi-cornered fights ... would come as a disadvantage to parties opposed to the Congress due to massive division of votes among the Opposition parties...

What is worrying the Congress though is its dwindling support of traditional allies. The Ali, Kuli and Bengalis are unhappy with the ruling party for reasons of their own. As a fallout of the general disenchantment with the Congress, Muslims are drifting towards the AGP, while the Kulis are fed up with the ruling party for not paying any heed to their longstanding demand for tribal

status...

Religious minorities, especially the Muslims settled permanently in Assam after migration from erstwhile East Bengal, East Pakistan and present-day Bangladesh... (and) concentrated primarily on the Indo-Bangladesh border districts of Hailakandi and Karimganj districts of Barak valley in southern Assam as also in Dhubri and Goalpara districts in Western Assam, part of the Brahmaputra valley.

There are other influential pockets of this religious minority especially in Naogaon, Kokrajhar, Nalbari, Barpeta, Kamrup districts among others... The Ahom community and the tribals have been accusing Saikia of "Islamisation" and "Bangladeshisation" of Assam.

According to some political analysts, the Muslims today form 26 per cent of the total population while the Ahom community has been reduced to 22 per cent. The ruling Congress has as many as 18 Muslim legislators out of its total of 63, while the Asom Gana Parishad has one and the CPI and the Socialist Union (SUCI) have two each, totalling 23 out of a 126-member legislative assembly.

Throughout the seventies and eighties, Saikia had assiduously cultivated the Muslim vote-bank and taken up cudgels on their behalf resolutely defending the genuine original settlers as well as illegal migrants, who in turn stood staunchly by the Congress in all elections to the State Assembly and the Lok Sabha.

Yet, the Muslim alienation of Saikia is almost complete, emotionally if not electorally. Of all the minorities, the Muslims today have no qualms about betraying their two-decade-old benefactor...

RSS: Consensus of Allahabad Conclave

The RSS leadership feels that notwithstanding the involvement of BJP leaders in the hawala case, the prevailing political scenario is congenial for the victory of the BJP and its allied forces in the forthcoming elections... The RSS has made it clear, it would have the overall command on the election apparatus and the BJP will have to evolve its strategy according to the norms set by the meeting...

In a far reaching decision, the RSS has agreed to give ticket to the outsiders also but the person must have a clean public and private life, this criteria according to sources will help the BJP to counter the moves of the Congress.

The two-day conclave of the RSS, held in Allahabad, came to the conclusion that in the present situation the BJP has not come up to expectations - in its performance, hence it is imperative that the RSS should take a more active and decisive role. Sources maintain that the RSS leadership was also not happy with some of the BJP leaders who bypassed the dictates of the RSS.

The RSS leadership still holds the view that instead of trying to search for a fresh poll issue, the BJP-VHP combine and their allies should continue to highlight corruption as the main issue and the next election should be fought on this plank. This would dispel the impression

Report on Kerala

Desperate Scramble for Muslim Votes

The Congress(I)-led ruling coalition in Kerala is busy wooing the Indian National League (INL) into its fold in a desperate bid to retain Muslim votes in the Malabar region. The Indian Union Muslim League, the second major constituent in the ruling United Democratic Front, has already struck an understanding with People's Democratic Party, led by Mr. Abdul Nasser Madani...

For the same reason, the INL chief, Mr. Ebrahim Sulaiman Sait, is still confused about rejoining the front, directly or indirectly. He has already shot down the IUML proposal for a merger "in the larger interest of the community". Yet, Mr. Sait is eager to avoid a split in Muslim votes. There are overtures from the Left... to Mr. Sait to come to an understanding in those seats that belong to IUML and field "joint independent candidates". Mr. Sait is, however, not sure whether the Leftists will keep their word after the elections are over. In any case, the Leftists' are over. In any case, the Leftists' proposal to Sait... conveyed through CPI leaders, is too one-sided for serious consideration. Madani... has already announced his third front - comprising the PDP, the JSS, led by Mrs. K.R. Gowri, and a few other organizations - which would come to an alliance of sorts with the ruling coalition... Spurned by the Leftists for long, Madani is left with no other option. If Mr. Madani's third front were to fight the elections on its own... it would merely help the victory of the Left Front, with a three-way split in Muslim votes.

... A Section of the IUML is opposed to any arrangements with either INL or PDP... Any understanding with INL or PDP would deprive the party of its Hindu votes due to the general impression that Sait and Madani are fundamentalists... The IUML-PDP understanding and the talks between IUML and INL have the Leftists worried... The Left Front has benefited from the split in Muslim votes in all recent by-elections and elections to local bodies.... Sait... rejoining the IUML partially or fully... would help the designs of the Cong(I). it is a crucial decision for Sait...

(Source: T.N. Gopakumar in The Statesman, 20 March, 1996)

in the common people that the BJP is plagued with corruption... The RSS has directed the BJP units not to dilute - the issue of fighting - corruption.

... The BJP and VHP while pursuing their tactical line of fighting corruption should amalgamate the issue of Hindutva with it.

... The VHP and other allied organisations on their own will further the line of Hindutva to the advantage of the BJP candidate. The failure of the BJP in drawing the Dalit force has spurred the RSS to set up a core group "Dalit Seva Sangha", on the line of the Banavasi Sangh active in the tribal areas. Dalit Seva Sangh working in close cooperation with BJP, and under RSS control, will be able to counter the BSP and other and garner Dalit votes.

RSS: Report on Political Strategy - Keeping Option Open

Based on Indian Express, the Hindu and the Statesman

The RSS annual Pratinidhi Sabha... appears to be having second thoughts on its decision to enter the electoral arena to improve the prospects of the Bharatiya Janata Party in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections.

The appeal to the Hindus and the Hindutva workers... formed the core of the annual report of the .. general secretary of the RSS H.V. Seshadri (See text).

Seshadri (called upon) the RSS volunteers... to strive hard to rouse the people to their "national duty"...

... The spokesperson of the RSS... denied that the Sangh had taken a decision to enter the electoral arena....

On Enron not finding a place in the resolution on Swadeshi, Mr. Vaid remarked that the RSS is not a blind opponent of foreign capital. This again was a clear departure from... Seshadri's annual report...

... Seshadri's report skipped any direct reference to the BJP to benefit also parties such as Shiv Sena and other small outfits or independents who ... also swear by the Hindutva, although Ayodhya, Varanasi or Mathura did not figure in any resolution.

... The three resolutions that the RSS Pratinidhi Sabha passed cannot be questioned even by the Left parties, in total exclusion to Hindutva agenda which has been left to the VHP to espouse. The three resolutions related to swadeshi, corruption in public life and concern for national security... Many who are averse to the communal approach, would find the shifted agenda acceptable, in pre-poll and post-poll context...

... The RSS workers are taking up issues, in most cases independent of the BJP network. These would help enlisting support of those who may not support the BJP openly. The full-timers who have offered their services for six months and have been deployed at block level.... In the internal assessment that emerged during the ... conclave... the BJP and Hindutva outfits have fair prospect of securing majority, although it is conceded that the Hawala scam has made a dent in the morale... The RSS leadership conveyed to the BJP representatives who attended the Pratinidhi Sabha meeting, that leaders with sullied image should be sidelined. And the concerned of the RSS leaders over growing instances of indiscipline in the political wing was also conveyed in no uncertain terms. The RSS apparently would have a say in clearing candidates for the Lok Sabha poll. In certain constituencies, however, the criteria are bound to be relaxed, where the rivals would appear to enjoy muscle power...

The deliberations... gave enough indication of the confusion prevailing in the Sangh leadership over the extent it should participate in politics... The RSS spokesman

clarified that it did not intend to join active politics but to support all the parties which subscribed to Hindutva.

Seshadri pointed out that the Sangh had not issued an appeal for the BJP...

The RSS ... has begun to keep its options open in coming elections. In fact, in its desperate attempt to become the key player behind the stage, the RSS may even consider a tactical yet covert alliance with the Rao Congress...

That seems to be the underlying message... The reason for the RSS to play a game of realpolitik is obvious - the political election scenario is too confusing and the organization wants to maximize its gains even if it means temporarily ditching its political ally, the Bharatiya Janata Party...

... By not directing its workers - as it has done on previous occasions to work for the BJP and by not criticizing the Prime Minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, the Sangh has finally given the first hint...

... The RSS leaders are apparently not too confident of the BJP doing well at the hustings... The RSS, which has been hedging its bets for some time, has finally concluded that the BJP may not necessarily be the winning horse.

That is the conclusion... draws from the fact that... the RSS did not pass a resolution giving blanket support to the BJP...

... RSS.. concerned.. is expected to be selective about who it wants to support. The first criterion is whether the BJP candidate has strayed from the "Hindutva" path. The RSS would mainly canvass for candidates in the BJP who are known to be clean.

More significant is the attitude towards Narasimha Rao. In sharp contrast to the stinging attack on Rao by the BJP leaders... The RSS resolution has been silent on him... The RSS is determined to see that the politics of caste do not return to centrestage and with that end in view Rao appears as a better option...

This is not a new situation for the RSS... In fact, there were allegations then that the RSS had arrived at a tacit understanding with Mrs. Gandhi.

Will history repeat itself and the RSS do a deal with Mr. Rao.

Only the BJP, with its focus on Hindutva, can claim to be truly secular, as the very concept of Hindutva is synonymous with secularism.

- Kalraj Misra, BJP Leader

Open

Electoral Report of Congress: An Overview

Askari H. Zaidi in The Times of India, 21 March, 1996

politics but of Hindutva. It has not been an issue. The reason for the Congress's failure in the last election was largely attributed to the sympathy vote after the assassination of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi) it would be the end of the Nehru-Gandhi family's dominance...

The Congress had won 232 seats in the last elections in the House of 543... Party spokesman V.N. Gadgil claims "the Congress will get about 300 seats this time".

Mr. Gadgil said, that the Congress... has always got about 35 per cent votes even when it failed to form the government. "So, basically we have to ... secure about 10 per cent additional votes... And this will not be a problem given the fact that the Opposition is hopelessly divided and we have given a stable and performing government".

Secondly, "out of the 232 seats that we won in the last election, in 140 seats Congress candidates had a victory margin of more than 50,000 votes. We will not have any problem in winning these seats this time as well. Moreover, about 75 party candidates lost with a margin of less than 10,000 votes. They can easily improve this time".

As for the poll strategy, Mr. Gadgil said "we have not... all-India strategy except seeking votes in the name of stability, development and social harmony.... Political situation and issues vary from state to state....

The Congress adversaries, however, discount Mr. Gadgil's optimism, saying it is going to lose many of the existing seats because of the turn around in the situation in several states where Opposition parties dealt a severe defeat to the Congress in the last assembly elections.

For instance, the Congress had won 38 seats out of a total of 48 seats in Maharashtra in the 1991 poll. But, in the last assembly elections, the BJP-Shiv Sena combine ousted the Congress from power...

Similarly is the case with Karnataka, where the Congress won 23 of the 28 seats in the elections. However, the Janata Dal's coming to power in the state in the last assembly poll has put a big question mark on the Congress party's ability to repeat the performance...

Moreover, the Congress does not seem to have made any headway in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar which jointly account for 139 seats. Also, a large sections of the Muslims (due to the demolition of the Babari Masjid), Scheduled Castes (because of the growing influence of Kanshi Ram's BSP) and backward castes (due to the continuing influence

of leaders like Mulayam Singh and Laloo Prasad Yadav) are still alienated from the Congress, particularly in the north.

Mr. Gadgil, however, says that the split of the Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh, the power struggle in the Gujarat BJP and political instability in Uttar Pradesh will adversely affect the Opposition parties. "As far as Muslims in Uttar Pradesh are concerned, there is a rethinking among them towards the Congress party. At least in Maharashtra they have shown a definite inclination towards the Congress..."

The Congress also hope to benefit from the recent CBI action in the hawala case... The chargesheeting of Advani has demolished the myth that the BJP is a clean and disciplined party," says Mr. Gadgil.

Political observers, however, feel the Narasimha Rao government's failure to introduce the Lok Pal Bill covering the Prime Minister in the last parliamentary session... may deprive the Congress of any electoral advantage...

... Not only the opposition parties but also some of the chargesheeted former ... ministers like Madhavrao Scindia had termed the CBI action as "politically motivated". To remove the charge and demonstrate that the government was serious about cleansing the electoral system, it was necessary for the government to bring about electoral reforms before the general elections, which it failed to do.

In the given circumstances, working out the BSP in ... Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana and with ... the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu can give a distinct edge to the Congress...

CPI(M): Statement by G.S. H.S. Surjeet On Stand towards the Indian National League(INL)

... The CPI(M) had time and again stated that it would not join hands with any communal party... The possibility of the Left and the INL supporting the same candidates in the coming election as indicated by the West Bengal Chief Minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu... it would depend on the person being fielded in a given constituency. "If the person is secular minded, then may be that could happen"...

The Left... should be able to reach out to the Muslim masses. The Left has been a consistent fighter in defence of the rights of the minorities. When Babari Masjid was demolished, the Left was in the forefront of the struggle. No other party had taken such a position.

Congress; Playing a Dangerous Game of Dividing Muslims

Views of Md. Ishtiaq Husain Qureishi, Lucknow

Muslims are not bonded in perpetuity to any political party, nor are they against any other on a perennial basis. They support or oppose a party on issues like any other group of free, law-abiding citizens. They don't act on orders from foreign governments or as agents of foreign intelligence outfits. ...

We are witnessing a dangerous game of divide and rule being played by Congress on the Muslim community. They are under the delusion that the Bareilvi sect can be led up the garden path easily. Sadly, when Prime Minister Rao visited Bareilly to launch his grand plan, he was booed away by irate Muslims, Bareilvi and non-Bareilvi alike. The party tried it once again in Kanpur, with equally disastrous consequences.

Had the Congress party been sincere, it would not have needed to resort to cheap gimmicks. Muslims had sportingly tolerated discrimination in jobs and consistent undermining of their cultural symbols like Urdu. However, when the Babari Masjid was destroyed with government help and use of a hundred and one subterfuges Muslims finally decided that Congress party was not to be believed in future. Then followed a long night of anti-Muslim violence and government-sponsored witch-hunt under TADA. Muslims became sure in the knowledge that governmental promises were not meant to be fulfilled.

However, let it be clearly understood that if Muslims are not somebody's "dumb, driven cattle", they are nobody's foes either. Like other sections of citizenry they take their constitutionally ordained duty to elect fair-minded, active, efficient persons to power. If they have to oppose corrupt and discredited people in the line of their constitutional duty, they do not become anti-national for doing so-not by any stretch of imagination. Anyway, by now, Muslims have been thoroughly immunised (against) such wild accusations. Without fear, they call a spade a spade.

A sinister move is being made to render Muslims ineffective by dividing their votes and allowing BJP to win as a result... Muslim-baiters feel they can repeat the success they got through this strategy in recent panchayat and municipal polls by spending lavishly.

Interestingly, Muslim ministers in Union Government have lately been given a long rope - they have been allowed to speak against the government to create the ... false impression that the government is not really culpable for the excesses against Muslims, that it had only committed some sincere error of judgement and that others took advantage of the mistakes. According to this line of thinking, Congress is the only saviour of Muslims, for has it not started investigating the problems of Muslims? ... The Congress has managed to keep on investigating those problems for half a century. By the

Akhilesh Tripathi On Muslim Votes in UP

A splintered third force in Uttar Pradesh has turned the electoral choice into a ticklish question for Muslims. The Congress(I) has finally lost hopes of wooing back the community's votes.... (Failure) by the SP and the BSP to forge an alliance threatens to divide the Muslim votes too in this most populous state of India where Muslims account for over 16 per cent votes. But more than that the concentration of Muslims in 23 out of 85 constituencies of UP lends them a crucial weight...

... Division of Muslim votes almost looks likely a reality. BSP may field a lot of Muslims on its ticket from nearly 30 constituencies which will eventually divide the Muslim votes lending advantage to the BJP.

To muddy the political waters even more, two small Muslim parties have formed a "Muslim Morcha" which has announced its plan to contest the elections in the state and also to seek seat adjustments with secular and leftist forces. The two constituents of the Morcha are Indian National League and the All India Muslim Forum... The two constituents are trying to rope in the Muslim Majlis (Secular) led by Zulfikarullah, an almost moribund party and the Bharatiya Loktantrik Party led by Dr. Masood Ahmad, former Education Minister in Mulayam Singh Ministry...

... The front is sum total of four zeros. But it may confuse the choices for Muslims in Muslim dominated constituencies...

Assessment of the Muslim mood indicates that the community is likely to plump for secular parties who are already assured of the votes of a sizable section of Hindus, be they SCs, STs or OBCs. The emergence of the Morcha is therefore totally in conflict with the interest as well as the current disposition of the community ...

Muslim Vote Power in UP

S.No.	Constituency	Muslim % of Total Votes
1.	Rampur	42
2.	Moradabad	40
3.	Saharanpur	37
4.	Bijnore	38
5.	Amroha	37
6.	Meerut	30
7.	Kairana	29
8.	Bariely	28
9.	Sambhal	27
10.	Muzaffarnagar	27
11.	Hardwar	25
12.	Bahraich	22
13.	Kanpur	22
14.	Khurja	21
15.	Hapur	21

(Source: The Radiance Viewsweekly, 24-30 Mar., 96)

time the investigation is over... it would be too late in the day for any worthwhile salvage...

(Source: The Nation and the World)

The Third Front A Nebulous Enigma Smita Gupta in The Times of India,

23 March, 1996

A year ago, the yet-to-gel Third Front's (TF) chances of coming to power at the Centre appeared bright, with the Congress almost non-existent in vast tracts of the Hindi heartland and the BJP yet to make inroads in the south. But today... the question that needs to be asked is whether the TF has "the will, vision and leadership" to become a reality.

The victories of the JD in the assembly elections in Karnataka and that of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in A.P. in 1994, followed by the return of Laloo Prasad in Bihar... in 1995 convinced these two National Front (NF) constituents that they were on the comeback trail...

... Since then, factional fighting, personal ambitions of the JD's leading lights, combined with an uninspiring president took its toll. Even the election of Laloo Prasad Yadav as party president has so far failed to galvanise the party: The fodder scam has occupied most of his attention. Worse, the TDP suffered a split last year, followed by the death of its supremo, N.T. Rama Rao... The NF's flirtation last year with the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) drove one of its founding members, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhgham (DMK) led by K. Karunanidhi, out of the front. The AIADMK is now hoping for an alliance with the Congress. Today, it is the Left - particularly the CPI(M) - rather than the JD which is playing a pivotal role in the formation of the TF...

The ... BSP joining the JD-SP combine in UP seems unlikely... If the TF has an advantage over its predecessor in 1989 in that it is ideologically cohesive - since the BJP is not (repeat not) part of it - the leadership question has yet to be settled unlike in 1989, when V.P. Singh was clearly identified as the leader...

So far, the TF remains a nebulous entity. Its electoral prospects will depend largely on how many political parties it is able to attract into its fold. For the moment, it remains a concept based on opposition to the Congress and the BJP - to the New Economic Policy (NEP) initiated by the former and the communal politics of the latter... Those currently in the TF are clearer on the communal question than on economic policy...

An Appeal to Political Parties, Independent Candidates and Individual Voters

... It is... important and urgent that all concerned - political parties, individual candidates and the electorate - should take immediate steps to ensure that only honest candidates with a clean record of public service, unblemished by any involvement in shady deals with criminal or anti-social elements, and only those not guilty of bribery, corruption, nepotism or any electoral offences, incitement to communalism, casteism or religious fanaticism are put up for election. If the various political parties put up candidates with doubtful antecedents or anti-national, anti-social, communal or casteist prejudices, then the electorate must ensure that such candidates are defeated and that only those candidates with clean public record of service are elected. The same test should be applied to independent or party nominees.

We appeal to all patriotic Indians to heed this appeal and give it wide publicity by organising meetings, launching campaigns, canvassing support in favour of only honest candidates with a clean record and against those whose honesty and integrity are doubtful or shady.

Let every person eligible to vote exercise his right and cast his or her vote wisely and correctly so that the new, elected Lok Sabha and State legislatures may comprise honest, dedicated, efficient and really patriotic individuals who have the people's interest at heart and not that of moneybags, blackmarketeers or anti-social and criminal elements.

Mother India expects every Indian to stand for the country's and people's welfare and against all elements who want to disrupt the rule of law, and the sacred principles of secularism, democracy, equality and justice enshrined in our Constitution... be counted on the side of her honour and dignity... and against... corruption, communalism and casteism

Jai Hind

Dharma Vira	T.N. Kaul	S.K. Singh
Rajinder Sachar	Soli Sorabji	Habib Tanvir
Sonal Mansingh	Danial Latifi	Ashwini Kumar
M.S. Rasgotra	J.N. Dhamija	V.K. Ahuja
Paul Gregorius	P.N. Srivastava	V.P. Dutt
and others		

MAJORITARIANISM

A Letter in the Pioneer, 28 February, 1996

... A strong section of 'majoritarians' among the politicians are communal, irrespective of whether they belong to the Hindutva brigade or so-called secular parties like the Congress. They work in tandem and consider the minorities merely as a vote bank, an expendable item, to be used, abused or even sacrificed at the altar of their political goals.

While on the one hand thousands of innocent Sikhs were killed in an organised violence after Mrs. Indira Gandhi was assassinated, no mass hysteria was witnessed

anywhere in the country when Mahatma Gandhi or Mr. Rajiv Gandhi were assassinated, because in both cases, the assassins belonged to the majority community.

... While Mrs. Gandhi's killers were hanged sometime ago, perpetrators of 1984 riots are still at large even after 11 years...

The 'majoritarians' should know that in today's world, the minorities cannot be wished away or decimated in the Hitlerian way. Nationalism and patriotism is not the preserve of any particular community.

CPI(M): Views of H.S. Surjeet

... In 1989, the opposition formation which came up was the result of an upsurge. Some Congressmen, led by V.P. Singh, who had left that party became the rallying point, the focus of attraction. It was only subsequently that there was division in the JD because of the disruption created by Chandra Shekhar.

The JD was in disarray and periodically, people kept leaving the party. Then the constituents of the National Front began to quit - first the AGP, then the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK). And more recently, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has split, causing yet more problems.

It is because of these reasons that the Left has had to take the initiative. Our consistent position has been to work to defeat both the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). We don't want the BJP to exploit the discontent in the country with the Congress. So we are making our best efforts to rally the non-Congress and non-BJP forces. The Communist Party of India (CPI) and we met recently and we have decided to intensify our efforts - we are in constant touch...

We are currently engaged in gathering all the secular forces together because we see a tremendous possibility of defeating the Congress and the BJP. But we have to admit that no clear picture has emerged as yet. On February 19, we achieved some success when (JD President) Laloo Prasad Yadav and (SP President) Mulayam Singh Yadav met and indicated that they were prepared to go together. With this decision, we have crossed a very big hurdle because UP is the most important state. The other hurdles are there in Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. We already have fronts in West Bengal and Kerala. In Maharashtra, we have already formed a front which includes the united Republican Party of India (RPI), the left parties, the JD and the SP.

It is only after all these fronts emerge in various states, that we will be able to project the National Front and the Left parties combine nationally. Because it is only when a clear picture of the Third Front emerges that people will begin to respond. The question (of participation or not) will only arise when there is a cohesive, credible front in place.

People are talking of evolving a common programme, but the question is: with whom?... It is no point working out a programme which the constituents of the front may or may not implement. So let everyone first come into the fold. By March 3, the CPM will finalise its own manifesto.... Eventually, once we know who all are part of the front, we will work out a common appeal. ...

(Source: The Times of India, 2 March, 1996)

UP: SJ-JD Alliance

The political scenario of Uttar Pradesh has crystallised following finalisation of poll alliance between Janata Dal and Samajvadi Party and with the Bahujan Samaj Party ruling out seat sharing with Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party while keeping the doors open for post poll alliance with the parties.

In the emerging scenario, the state is heading for a multi-concerned or quadrangular contest between Congress, BJP, BSP, JD-SP and Congress(Indira). However on majority of the seats, particularly in eastern and central Uttar Pradesh, the fight for the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections is likely to narrow down between BJP and JD-SP.

The alliance between SP-JD has resolved the minorities dilemma, who despite their distrust for the BSP after it formed its government in the State with the BJP support, had started looking towards it as yet another force which could take on the BJP in some pockets of the State, specially in western U.P.

However, Kanshi Ram's statement in Delhi in which he did not rule out the possibility of forming the Government at the Centre with the support of Congress and BJP has only confirmed their suspicion about his credentials...

Kanshi Ram's statement has, in fact, come at a crucial stage when Muslims, specially political leaders among them were getting influenced by their Statewide Dalit Muslim ekta rally. His statement would undoubtedly benefit JD-SP as division of the minority vote would get averted to a larger extent...

... The BJP is apparently happy with the political developments as they have succeeded in their game plan of creating a wedge between Mulayam Singh Yadav and Kanshi Ram, along with which the formidable combination of Dalit Muslims, backwards too stands fragmented. However, Mulayam Singh Yadav is confident that he would be able to win over Dalit support with the help of Raj Bahadur faction of the BSP.

... Infact the political situation of the state at the time of 1989 Lok Sabha elections was not much different from the one prevailing today. The only acute difference being that while Janata Dal and BJP had do tacit understandingly on the slogan of anti-Congressism, today they are fiercely pitted against each other. ...

During the past few years while JD lost a major chunk of its votes... in western UP. Mulayam has gained strength by consolidating minority and OBC votes. Congress stands divided. BJP appears on a sticky wicket while BSP despite its improved strength seems to more on a damaging spree than on a winning one.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 28 March, 1996)

Report on Muslim Votes in W. Bengal Udayan Namboodiri in the Indian Express, 4 March, 1996

West Bengal's electoral landscape for 1996 is expected to witness, for the first time in many years, a distinct ideological shift. The political contenders have now begun to treat the State's seven million Muslims as a distinct voting block. This unique development, owes its origin to the national political scene.

"The post-Babari era has driven the Muslims away from the Congress because the community felt betrayed. So the party, in its attempt to rebuild bridges is desperately trying to portray its rivals, which in West Bengal happens to be the Communists, as the bigger enemy," says Amanullah... of the ... Urdu daily, Afsal.

But certain developments in the State have also contributed to a communally charged political landscape: the question of Bangladeshi infiltration, corruption in the State Wakf Board, the way in which the Left Front government handled the flare-up in the aftermath of the Babari Masjid demolition in December 1992, the issue of cow slaughter and the state polity's answer to the Maharashtra Government's persecution of Bengali-speaking Muslims... Eighteen years of Marxist rule seemed to have by and large insulated West Bengal from communalism. This has been politically significant for a State which had undergone a traumatic partition and where the question of refugees... still looms large on local politics. ... Congress leader, Ms. Mamata Banerjee says "... Economically, the Muslims here have fared the worst because the Left Front did not lay down reservations for them. They have fattened the Muslim elite of the cities leaving the rural and urban poor to fend for themselves."

She points to the multi-crore scam in the State's Wakf Board which she claims to have exposed... Since Muslims make up 25% of the electorate, the Congress hopes to make an impression by focussing on the economic disadvantages faced by the community.

Mr. Zainal Abedin, Congress(I) leader in the State Assembly, says: "The Left Front is as communal as the BJP and we will expose them in this election."

The return of Mr. S.S. Ray to state politics has also exaggerated the communal flavour in the Congress campaign. He has reportedly expressed a desire to contest from a "Muslim seat" this time. According to his allies in the party, he would be carrying out the P.M.'s wish as part of the party high command's overall plan to woo back the Muslim vote. The Left parties are not overtly worried about the pro-Muslim campaign though its rival interpret a communal bias in the fact that most of the candidates in Murshidabad, Malda, Nadia and South 24 Parganas districts are ... Muslims....

A Report on M.P. 2% Swing Makes Difference between BJP and Congress

The Congress and the BJP have been sharing almost equally up to 90 per cent of votes cast in Madhya Pradesh since 1980. Before that Jan Sangh and Janata Party had done the same. In 1991 elections, the two parties had split 87 per cent votes almost vertically.

The BJP had secured 41.88 per cent votes to Congress' 45.34. But while BJP managed only 12 seats, the Congress rode back home with 27. The third force in the shape of Janata Dal or BSP still means nothing in State politics.

This time, however, the situation has become interesting since Arjun Singh, is likely to divide Congress votes. In 1989, V.C. Shukla had weaned away a sizeable chunk for... Janata Dal... The same thing happened in 1977 when the Congress had split.

The difference of votes between the two main parties is so little that even a two per cent swing in favour of one may catapult, it to victory. This is where Arjun Singh factor becomes important. If his alliance with BSP comes through, it will be a close contest on at least five seats in North MP - Satna, Rewa, Morena, Bhind and Sidhi.

If the two parties jointly cause a two per cent negative swing in favour of BJP then the latter will not have to do much apart from putting up a candidate. Observers here believe that Singh is likely to put up strong candidates in these places even if it happens to benefit the BJP.

This tendency can be particularly damaging for the Congress in at least six more constituencies - Sagar Raipur, Kanker, Bastar, Jabalpur and Khandwa. In these constituencies, the BJP candidates had lost by less than 20,000 votes...

In 1991, BJP too had won four of the 12 seats with a margin of less than 20,000 votes. The four seats were Hoshangabad, Khargone, Mandsuar and Damoh....

[Secular voters should, therefore, support the strongest winnable candidate against the BJP, whatever his party label - Editor]

(Source: The Indian Express, 29 March, 1996)

Thoughts of Jawahar Lal Nehru

- * India will be land, as in the past, of many faiths, equally honoured and respected, but of one national outlook, not a narrow nationalism living in its own shell, but rather the tolerant, creative nationalism which, believing in itself and the genius of its people, takes full part in the establishment of an international order.
- * The future of India and Pakistan lies in their friendship and cooperation for the benefit of both.

Report on Kerala: Left Dilemma over Muslim Votes

Unni Rajen Shanker in The Indian Express, 29 March, 1996

The CPI(M) in Kerala refuses to come out of the closet. The party knows electoral politics is made of one-night stands, but a heavy ideological baggage and political prudishness to not allow it to legitimise its illicit affair with the Indian National League (INL). So, on the eve of elections, the party is grappling with the dialectics of modern politics: of ideology and reality.

After serving the CPI(M) interests like a djinn for long, the INL leader Ibrahim Sulaiman Sait is demanding an electoral alliance with the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF). The lesser constituents of the front do not mind but the big brother is confused. It went ahead with an undercover understanding with the INL in previous elections, reaped its dividend, celebrated the triumph, lived the euphoria but refused to recognise the INL.

The state leadership of the CPI(M) had tried to prepare itself for an open alliance with the INL. But the ideological calisthenics spearheaded by the veteran leader EMS Namboodiripad was so surreal that not only did it receive national ridicule, the central leadership put its foot down and rejected the proposal to have alliances with communal parties.

The result: Ibrahim Sulaiman Sait, who left the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) to form the INL, was left out in the cold. What made him leave the party he headed was not just the refusal of its Kerala leadership to quit the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) after the demolition of Babari Masjid. He had clear signals from the CPI(M) state leaders that his new party would be taken into the opposition LDF.... He carefully omitted the word Muslim from his party's name.

But the nexus continued. Though there was no apparent understanding between the two in the by-elections, the civic polls obviously showed the CPI(M) was not keen on shutting its doors on Sait. The LDF could not have managed to achieve remarkable victories in the urban Muslim pockets of Malapuram in the civic elections.

Yet, the party continued to take Sait for granted, though he claims he was assured of an open understanding before the general election. Sait has his minus points. First, he doesn't have his roots in the State. Secondly, his party hasn't been able to prove its strength, electorally or otherwise while the other contender for Muslim vote bank, Abdul Nasser Madani, has.

Then, why can't the CPI(M) close the chapter forever? Because, the party hasn't... The by-elections and civic polls... have a striking pattern and reveal a split in the Muslim vote bank after the demolition of Babari Masjid. The impact was visible across the State,

especially in Palakkad, Malappuram and Trichur districts.

One fact was clear: the IUML lost a considerable area of influence after December 6, 1992, because it continued to support the Congress which many traditional IUML voters thought was responsible for the demolition. The disillusioned Muslims voted against the Congress in the by-election for Ottappalam Lok Sabha constituency. He voted for Madani's PDP in the Guruvayur assembly by-election. The result was the same: victory for the LDF. The pattern didn't change in the civic polls and the LDF won again.

Madani proved what he could when his candidate ensured the defeat of the IUML in Guruvayur, and has almost bargained his way to electoral glory: his People's Democratic Party, a politically-correct reincarnation of Islamic Sevak Sangh, has almost struck a deal with the UDF.

The CPI(M) sees that Madani will help the UDF get many votes it lost. The party can't hope that it can continue to survive on the wounds in the collective memory of the Muslim electorate. The CPI(M) became more desperate when the UDF started wooing Sait.

With the new Chief Minister A.K. Antony, his populist measures and clean reputation, redeeming the image of the UDF in the election year, the CPI(M) can't rely on the negative votes against the ruling front. Moreover, a marginal drift in votes could result in a reversal of electoral fortunes in Kerala.

That leads the LDF to the long-ignored Sait. But the past is haunting the CPI(M): it was for suggesting an alliance with a 'communal party', the IUML, that it expelled its fire-brand leader M.V. Raghavan.

As in the past, the options are clear: either say no to a 'communal party' or go for an open alliance. Politics, in our times, doesn't have place for paramours, or principles, for that matter.

Government Statement On Proselytisation Activities of Christian Missionaries

According to Article 25 of the Constitution of India, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion. 'Public Order' is listed as Item No.1 of List-II-State List of 7th Schedule of the Constitution of India. As such, action for conversion from one religion to another religion through fraud and coercion is to be taken by the State Governments.

(Source: LSUQ No. 973 dated 7.3.1996 by R.S. Kashwan)

Votes

Report on Maharashtra Republic Party Revived

It is a force born of people power. Or to be precise, of the Dalits' impatience with their egoistic and quarrelsome leaders. For nearly five decades they had been taken for a ride by various parties, particularly the Congress, styling itself as the saviour of the backwards and the downtrodden.

But what hurt most was the betrayal of those who had inherited the Republic Party of India (RPI), the brainchild of none other than their beacon light, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

The mood of despondency among the backward masses in Maharashtra reached an all-time low after all the 10 RPI factions drew a blank in the last assembly elections. Despair turned to anger when they realised that the unrepentant leaders were still nursing their own bloated egos instead of realising that divided they would be political nonentities; united they would be a force to reckon with....

...What Kanshi Ram and Mulayam Singh did in UP will be replicated by the front in Maharashtra. There... the socio-political structure was shattered. The Muslims joined Singh's SP, Dalits rallied behind Kanshi Ram and the Mandalites went over to the Dal and the upper caste switched loyalties to the BJP.

A similar scenario may be emerging in Maharashtra if the third front game-plan works out. The RPI leaders are hoping that Mulayam Singh works his magic on the state's Muslims who are wary of the Hindutva alliance and contemptuous of the Congress...

V.P. Singh, the RPI leaders believe, will galvanise the SCs, STs and OBCs. The third front... will wean away at least 40% of the Congress votes. "Then people reluctantly voted for the Congress because there was no credible alternative. Now our fight will be with the Sena-BJP alliance. Congress is in a miserable position," says Makkaram, ex-MLA.

There is a distinct possibility that, like in UP, the Congress may be relegated to the third place in state politics... The RPI leaders concede that the front may not be able to cut into the Hindutva alliance votes. But the big question is whether the leaders will be able to sink their differences and present a united front.

The third front taking shape in Maharashtra may well be the nucleus of a larger alternative force emerging at the national level. To bring parties as disparate as the Dal and the SP under one umbrella would itself be a tall order. And making them stick together would be a tougher task....

If the RPI-led third front does become a reality, the political dispensation in Maharashtra may be in for an earthquake. The Marathas and the Kunbis (farmer class) who have been dominating the scene ever since the sate was formed may have to give way to a coalition of backwards and minorities. The Lok Sabha elections could well be a watershed.

(Source: The Week, 3 March, 1996)

Report on Karnataka

M.N. Chakravarty in The Indian Express,
1 March, 1996

For Deve Gowda and his men there doesn't seem to be a problem in the world. And ever since they swept the hustings with a resounding clear majority, the going has been good for Karnataka's Janata Dal government.

Dissidence has always been under check, never allowed to raise its ugly head to ruin the image of the party and there isn't any state-level scandal that the party needs worry about. The recent polls to the zilla parishads and city corporations are ample indication that the party continues to be in fine fettle and, most of all, that the people's support is with it. It managed to bag most of the zilla parishads with the generous backing of Independents - whose total strength in the Assembly is higher than the Congress and the BJP...

The BJP is saddled with more problems. ... In 1991, it got 28.8 per cent votes to win four seats in the Lok Sabha, and this came down to 17 per cent in the 1994 Assembly elections. Of the 20 zila parishads not one is under the BJP, and that it could not even get a toehold in Coorg - three of its MLAs come from there - proves beyond doubt that the party has to do some soul-searching as far as grass-roots support is concerned.

But the leaders of the party are nonchalant. ... The Congress, on the other hand, is taking the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls more seriously. With 23 of the 28 parliamentary seats in Karnataka having gone in its favour in 1991, the party now feels it can put up a good show... The Congress may be pushing its luck as far as hawala is concerned, but hawala or no hawala the BJP seems out of the reckoning.

Report on Maharashtra: Muslims Inclined towards Congress

Nitin Padte in The Indian Express, 27 March, 1996

The 11% Muslim voters in Maharashtra are slowly but surely veering towards the Congress. The party's inaction on Babari Masjid is still resented but the overriding concern is to keep the BJP and Shiv Sena out. Since no viable third force is in sight, the Congress is the obvious choice... "They surely don't like the Congress but see no alternative. They will end up voting for the Congress as a lesser evil," says a former state Congress minister Ishaq Jamkhanawala.

Muslims are spread all over the state in significant numbers. Their stronghold are Malegaon, Aurangabad, Osmanabad, Bhiwandi, Latur, Nagpur, Akola, Raigad and Buldhana. In the city, Ghatkopar, South Bombay, South-Central Bombay, North Bombay and North-West Bombay are their bastions. ... In other parts of the state, some Muslims may vote for other constituents of the third force, like the RPI, PWP and CPI, if the candidate seems capable of defeating the Sena-BJP nominee...

... It is generally believed that if the Congress successfully highlights the communal gaffes of the state government and convinces the minorities that a vote for the third force will be wasted, it will be able to sway the Muslims again.

(Source: The Indian Express, 27 March, 1996)

Maharashtra: Shahabuddin's Advice to Ulema Council, Bombay, 3 February, 1996

Idraak has been kind enough to send me newspaper clippings relating to the meeting of the prominent Muslims of Bombay organised by your Council on 20 January, 1996. Although no definite decision has been taken, it is indeed a good initiative which should be emulated in all parts of the country.

I would like to place my personal view before the Council that on the whole it shall not be beneficial for the Muslim community to support any political party or front in the country, as a whole, or in any State, as a whole. Every party has got a base and strength in some Constituencies and not all. Therefore, while the Muslim voters may help its candidate in winning a seat in a Constituency where it is strong, Muslim votes will be wasted where it does not have a base or does not have adequate strength of its own.

If there were a direct fight throughout the country or even in any State between the BJP and its allies and a national secular alliance, the situation will be different. Then the Muslims can safely vote for the candidates of the secular alliance. But no such secular alliance is likely to come into existence or be operational for the coming general election. Thus the secular parties will be undercutting each other and helping the BJP to win, because of the division of secular votes.

Muslims have legitimate grievances even against the secular parties and there is no secular party whose conduct is without blemish or which has consistently stood by the Muslim community, made their problem a part of its agenda and undertaken programmes of action for resolving those problems. Even then the future of the Muslim community in the country lies in the secular order and in strengthening the representatives of secular parties in the State legislatures and the Parliament.

From the Muslim point of view, the main issue in the coming elections is Hindutva versus Secularism. Therefore, the Muslim community must first define its political objective: to stop the march of the Hindutva forces led by BJP to Delhi. This implies that the Muslim community must contribute decisively to defeat BJP in as many as constituencies as possible.

In our system, even one vote more or less can mean defeat or victory. Therefore, the Muslim masses have to be made conscious of the importance of their votes even in Constituencies where they form a small percentage of the electorate.

Secondly, we must understand that there is a contradiction in the interest of the community and that of a political party. The political party may lose a constituency but the votes it secures will be added to its total at the State level for its recognition as a State or National Party. This may happen even if it does not win a single seat in the State and, in fact, by taking away a part of the Muslim votes it helps the BJP to win all the seats. This may be an extreme scenario but it must be kept in view. The time is gone when the Muslim should use their

vote to reward this or that leader or party. They should vote with a fixed purpose. This can be done only at the Constituency level.

Thirdly, the Muslims have to ensure that their votes are not divided or scattered among more than one candidate. So that it can be effective in deciding the outcome or contribute to the victory of a secular candidate.

The only option for the Muslim electorate is to vote massively and unitedly for a secular candidate - a candidate of anyone of the secular parties, which has a base in that constituency and which is the main adversary of the BJP in that constituency and, given the Muslim support, would be in a position to defeat the BJP candidate.

I would, therefore, suggest that for every constituency in Maharashtra, the Ulema Council, along with other Muslim organisations and individuals, should set up small consultative committees to persuade the candidates which do not have a chance of winning that constituency to retire from the field, select the candidate who has the best chance to defeat the BJP candidate, whatever his political party or alliance, and then advise the community to vote for him, for the survival of the secular democratic order in the country.

The task may be difficult but if the constituency level Consultative Committees consist of individuals who have no personal axe to grind or who are not involved in party politics, does its home work, it is not impossible.

Radiance on Muslim Political Strategy, 1950-1971

Muslim political parties have drawn a blank in the recent mid-term polls, almost every where in India except in Kerala, Madras and West Bengal. This is something which Muslim leadership must give very serious thought to.

The failure of Muslim political parties to win even a single seat in this vast area, is in fact the failure of the third political experiment in post-independence India. The first experiment consisted in their blind support to the Congress party... But in 1967 the Muslims felt that the Congress did not pay adequate attention to their real grievances. Hence they decided to discard the Congress, for once, and to try those candidates belonging to non-Congress parties. But once these candidates were elected to the Parliament they quite forgot all their promises to the Muslim community.

The third and the last experiment was made in the recent... polls. Muslim political organisations put up their own candidates in the hope of winning at least a few seats with the help of Muslim votes... This latest experiment has also failed not merely because of the 'Indira wave' but also because, unlike Kerala and West Bengal, there was not a single constituency in this area where Muslim

(Contd. on page 190)

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Insaf Morcha: Charter of Demands

To Protect Religious and Linguistic Minorities

1. Establishment of Ministry of Minority Affairs under the Prime Minister and the Introduction of a National Code for Minorities applicable to all Social Groups which constitute a minority at various administrative levels - Union, State, District, Block and Panchayat.
2. Territorial Reorganisation of the Union to create small States and small districts; Decentralisation of Power and Institution of Panchayati Rajs.
3. Introduction of System of proportional representation or reservation in legislature and rotation of existing reservation for SC/ST among all constituencies.
4. Distribution of development and welfare resources of the Central and State Governments, including allocation for poverty alleviation and employment generation schemes, among States and among districts within state, among blocks within districts and among Panchayats within blocks only on population basis.

POLITICAL RIGHTS

5. Exclusion or deletion of name from the electoral rolls only with due process of law.
6. Amendment to the Representation of the People Act to bar appeal to Hinduism or Hindutva or any other religion or religious ideology.

BABARI MASJID

7. Assurance on removal of makeshift temple and restoration of Babari Masjid site to Muslim community, if title thereto is decided in their favour and strict enforcement of Places of Worship (Special Provision) Act.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT-RESERVATION

8. Reservation in public employment and higher education for Muslim community as a Backward Class in proportion to population and degree of backwardness, at the central and state levels.

URDU

9. Introduction of Mother Tongue as the Medium of Primary Instruction and as the First Language under the Three Language Formula for Secondary education.
10. Recognition of and equal treatment to Minority Educational Institutions established under Article 30, by the State as well as the Universities and Examination Boards.
11. Publication of Cross-Tabulated Educational and Economic Statistics relating to all Social Groups as now done for SC and ST.

RELIGIOUS RIGHTS - PERSONAL LAW

12. No imposition of uniform civil code.

Summary of Parliamentary Proceedings (26 February - 12 March, 1996)

I - RAJYA SABHA

Papers Tabled:

- 28 Feb : Annual Reports of the National Foundation for Communal Harmony for 1992-93 and 1993-94.
: A.R. of Animal Welfare Board for 1994-95.
8 Mar : 11th A.R. of Minorities Commission for 1988-89.
: A.R. of Delhi Urban Arts Commission, 1994-95.
: A.R. of D.D.A. for 1994-95.

Statutory Resolution:

- 27 Feb : Resolution on Extension of President's Rule in UP introduced.

Motion of Thanks to President:

- 28 Feb- : Motion moved. M. Afzal and M.A. Samadari
1 Mar participated. P.M. replied; adopted.

Resolution on International Women's Day

- 8 Mar : Adopted.

Valedictory Session for Retiring Members:

- 7 Mar : Najma Heptulla, S. Bakht, M.A. Samadari and G.N. Azad participated.

II - Lok Sabha

Papers Tabled:

- 28 Feb : Annual Reports of the National Foundation for Communal Harmony for 1992-93 and 1993-94.
6 Mar : Annual Report of Delhi Urban Art Commission for 1994-95.
: A.R. of Khadi and Village Industries Commission for 1994-95.
7 Mar : A.R. of Minorities Commission for 1988-89.
8 Mar : A.R. of Handloom Export Promotion Council for 1994-95.
12 Mar : A.R. of National Handloom Development Corporation Ltd. for 1994-95.

Motion of Thanks on President's Address:

- 12 Mar : Moved and discussed. E. Ahamed participates.

Government Bill - Introduced:

- 29 Feb : The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 1996.

Matters under Rule 377:

- 29 Feb : On need to check violation of Human Rights in the country by J.S. Brar.

Private Member's Resolution:

- 8 Mar : On large scale illegal immigration of people from across the Indo-Bangladesh and the Indo-Pakistan borders - moved by R.S. Rawat. S. Shahabuddin participates.

Resolution on International Women's Day:

- 8 Mar : Adopted.

M.K. Narayanan on Minorities Appeasement

... The less than flattering image of the Muslims minority hardly squares with facts as they exist, though this may be what their self-styled leaders wish to project. Members of the community are talented, possess good business acumen and are highly skilled artisans. Many have started their own business ventures and are self-employed. Muslims are, no doubt, less well represented in areas of government and large corporations. To this extent, they are shut from the many new opportunities that have arisen as a result of liberalisation. More significantly, their education credentials have suffered by failing to partake of the vast expansion that has taken place in the realm of higher education. They, hence, face the danger of losing out on the benefits that accrue from meritocracy. The community leaders and the religious orthodoxy share a sizeable part of the blame, as also the mainstream parties and successive governments at the Centre, for this state of affairs, and the situation cannot be improved by emphasising backwardness and putting a premium on dependency.

Unfortunately, the trends now discernible are far from reassuring. Rather than improve matters, the religious minority seems intent on compelling the polity to effect basic structural changes...

Nowhere... have the more pertinent reasons for so-called backwardness and drop in education credentials of the community been addressed...

Mainstream parties like the Congress must know that while professing to remain faithful to their "mainstream convictions" and secular ideals, their attempts to curry favour with the more communal segments and fringe leaders who claim to speak for the minority, would not only mean mocking those convictions but would do irreparable damage to the future interests of the minority or minorities. In the interest of electoral gain or advantage, appeasing the occupants of the margins would be self-delusion and tarnish the credentials of the mainstream parties. A marriage of convenience of this kind will also eventually sour. To respond to any and every available demand on the plea of minority rights would Balkanise sentiments in the polity, creating a groundswell of opposition and backlash from the majority leading perhaps to even greater irrationality on their part...

It is far more important than appeasement or palliatives to see that both the majority and the minority display moderation, tolerance and forbearance. Otherwise, the spiral of action and reaction would go on endlessly enabling sectarian and communal forces to gain ground. Already, there are concerns being voiced by established parties ... that extremist elements are hijacking their agenda and altering the course and

direction of the party's politics by side-lining and marginalising its present leaders. This is inevitable given the bitter competition and struggle for votes among both the minority and majority segments, and the more radical and shocking the agenda the more its seductive appeal.

Rather than adopt a conciliatory or appeasement policy (even if it be election time)... the government should take constructive steps for improving the quality and status of the minority by channelising their energies into productive endeavours and upgrading educational opportunities for them. Side by side, the government and other mainstream parties should deal firmly with the so-called "Hindu Agenda" proposed by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and take steps to remedy the grievance already caused by the Shiv Sena-BJP government's decree in Maharashtra to wind up the Srikrishna Commission of Enquiry which went into the Bombay riots of 1992-93. Without this, the cycle of minority - majority demands would continue unabated...

Indulgence can be a serious, and possibly the ultimate, danger to secular policy. There is hardly any such thing as a temporary appeasement, whether of the minority or of the majority. The real need is to do something substantial to raise the status and standards of the minority communities, but expression, or evidence, of a pronounced "tilt" at election time towards the minority at the expense of the majority can have unfortunate repercussions. If the mainstream parties are not to surrender their initiative to communal and sectarian forces and deny extremist elements in both the minority and majority an opportunity flourish, they need to make major mid-course corrections...

(Source: The Asian Age, 11 March, 1996)

Bonded Labour in Pakistan

Millions of workers in Pakistan are bought and sold as slaves and forced to work by landlords - often for life - to pay off their debts. A BBC report quoted civil rights groups in Pakistan as saying that there are up to 20 million bonded labourers in the country and showed bonded labourers working at a brick kiln under armed guard. "I'll keep them working as long as it takes", the landlord... told the BBC reporter. "There's no escape. Each one of them owes me 5,000 rupees (\$150).

The workers are prisoners on the farm or factories they are indebted to, the report said. ... "I owe 10,000 rupees and I have been here for 35 years", one worker said. "I'll never pay it off and when I die, my children will take over the debt." A man may take out a loan to cover emergencies or simply to survive, but can then find himself bonded for life and passed from one owner to another like livestock, the report noted.

Supreme Court Judgement Permitted Propaganda in the Name of Hindutva A Plea for Review by Eminent Lawyer Rajeev Dhavan

The BJP lost no time in declaring that "Hindutva" would be its main election plank in the forthcoming elections after the Supreme Court refused to review its controversial judgement on the subject.

If the response of the judges during arguments is to be understood, the following insights emerge: (i) All apprehensions about the permissible use of Hindutva in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's judgement are "imaginary and baseless"; (ii) Any criticism of this aspect of the judgement is either politically motivated or founded on ignorance (even if made by some of the finest legal minds in the country such as Mr. Justice Tarkunde, Mr. Nani Palkhivala and others); (iii) There is no scope for the judgement to be misunderstood (which it clearly has been) or being malappropriated politically (which it has been); (iv) Even if such malappropriation takes place, it can always be examined in an election petition (which, alas, will take years to decide long after the candidates and their parties have received their ill-gotten benefits; (v) A citizen who feels that this licence is going to poison the very basis on which India's secular electoral democracy depends cannot seek a review of the judgement. ...

...In the recent V.C. Mishra case concerning the power of the Court to disbar a lawyer in gross contempt of court, the lawyer community was able to persuade the Supreme Court to refer re-consideration to a Constitution Bench. While such powers are not to be exercised in every case, forbearance when they should be exercised may not always be salutary. Nor did the Court refrain from a review altogether. It used the opportunity to explain itself rather than allay apprehensions which must deepen after the BJP's decision to obtain electoral benefits from the decision.

The Hindutva judgement must be read as a whole in order to appreciate the fears about the two controversial aspects which deal with the permissive use of 'Hindutva' as an election slogan; and, the no less permissible appeal that a Hindu State will be established in Maharashtra. The Supreme Court has tried to clarify the latter, but not the former issue. The Supreme Court was surely right in laying down the test that "(c)are must be taken to remember that public speeches during election campaigns ordinarily are addressed to audience comprised of common men; and, therefore, the manner in which it would be understood by such an audience has to be kept in view".

But, with respect, no sooner was this insight declared, it seems to have been lost sight of in discussing the electoral significance of 'Hindutva'. The Supreme Court was not called upon to enter into a reified discourse on 'Hinduism' but decide on the impact of 'Hindutva' as a contemporary election slogan used by a political party to mobilise communal bias for electoral purposes.

In 1966, Mr. Justice Gajendragadkar (known for his over-assimilationist approach to questions of religious freedom) delivered a much criticised judgement in which the Court grandly told the Swami Narayans that they were Hindus even if they protested they were not; and, all that was at issue was whether 'untouchability' in the form of refusing temple entry could be practised by them. Relying in the main on Western inspired philosophical accounts and descriptions (much in the same way as the Hindutva judgement also does), that Court has been described as deciding that "a man who believes in what Dr. Radhakrishnan and Max Mueller and Monier Williams and B.G. Tilak would recognise as components of Hinduism may well be a Hindu..."

This judgement was followed in the tax case in 1975; and finally in the Hindutva judgement. This last judgement goes much further than telling 'ostensible' Hindus that they are, in fact, Hindus. Now, everyone in India is a Hindu of some kind or another because Hinduism (and, for good measure, Hindutva) can be equated with Indianism generally and "depicting the way of life of the Indian people... not confined to describe persons practising the Hindu religion as a faith". This, with respect, is a devastatingly troubling interpretation of secularism which is a part of the basic structure of our constitutional faith. It is also explosive in its potential for permitting communal appeals to be made in the name of religion.

Carrying, the matter further, the Court stated that "any reference to Hindutva of Hinduism in a speech (would not) make it automatically a speech based on the Hindu religion as opposed to the other religions or that the words 'Hindutva' or 'Hinduism' per se depict an attitude hostile to all persons practising any religion other than the Hindu religion." Such a transposition (from temple entry to Hinduism, to Hindutva, to the electoral uses of Hindutva) is not warranted... Even if Hinduism is everything the judges say it is, the discourse on it was irrelevant unless we view the whole picture from such Olympian heights that we ignore ground realities.

But, why is this part of the judgement so portentous? Three factors have to be read together. First, since the use of the word 'Hindutva' would not automatically be impermissible, a party's simply saying: "Vote Hindutva" without more would be treated as an appeal to nationalism rather than religion. Second, the Court also held that provocative and incendiary speeches by the acknowledged leaders of a political party cannot be attributed to a candidate unless and until his actual consent or complicity is shown. Such a narrow view of consent may be valid for contracts, but cannot be transposed to electoral law or public law generally. Third, the Court held that "...ex facie contents of a party manifesto cannot be a corrupt practice committed by a

candidate of that party".

The combination of these three factors is lethal. Political parties can flood the nation with "Vote Hindutva" propaganda with impunity. Leaders can visit constituencies and make all kinds of speeches without affecting their parties' candidates as long as actual consent or nexus is not shown. Apart from the fact that "Vote Hindutva" (even without more) is an appeal to religion (nothing more; nothing else), the refuge offered by the Supreme Court that an election can be set aside if it is shown that the election was materially affected, is illusory. "Material effect" is virtually impossible to estimate. If the court is not clear about secularism, that itself is a reason for review.

Clearly, the Supreme Court should review its judgement. It has ample powers to do so in special cases. This is a special case. If it does not do so, the electorate should be vigilant to ensure that they watch the use of these slogans with care and amass evidence for post-electoral challenges.

The judges are 'supreme', therefore, they are infallible. But, even an infallible judiciary cannot shut its ears to bonafide interactive critique....

V.M. Tarkunde on Hindutva Judgement

... By these judgements the Supreme Court Bench has watered down, to a very material extent, the rigour of the ... provision in the Representation of the People Act in respect of candidates who stood for Hindutva or who appealed for the creation of a Hindu State. Larger Benches of the Supreme Court had previously held that secular democracy is one of the basic features of the Indian Constitution, and that Section 123(3) of the Representation of the People Act was intended to uphold the principle of secular democracy. By watering down the meaning and rigour of that provision... Supreme Court has dealt a very severe blow to the principle of secular democracy. ...

These conclusions of the Supreme Court Bench clearly mean that if a candidate were to declare that he believed in Hindutva and therefore the voters should cast their votes in his favour, without saying anything more, he would not be committing any corrupt practice as defined by the Section 123(3) of the Act. He may, according to the Supreme Court Bench, be referring to the culture of the Indian people as a whole including Muslims, Christians and all other non-Hindu citizens. Can this conclusion be accepted as correct?

In the first place, any statement made before an audience should be interpreted in the sense in which the members of the audience are expected to understand it. During an electoral campaign, the purpose of almost every meeting is to appeal for the votes of the electorate. Would the normal electoral in India understand that what is meant by Hindutva is the culture of all the people of India including those of non-Hindu faiths? Obviously, by Hindutva most of the voters would understand the culture of Hindus including their religious faith, and not the faith

Supreme Court's Hindutva Judgement Views of Justice Rajindar Sachar

... If a Hindu candidate can thus avoid the disqualification by quoting the philosophic content of Hinduism, the same result must follow if an appeal is made by Muslim group in the name of Islam. ...

... On the analogy of the decision in Joshi's case it would be permissible for a Muslim candidate to ask for vote on the ground of Islam by arguing that he is asking for vote not on the ground of his religion but on the ground of philosophy of peace and surrender to God which also is the philosophy of the Gita. If that be the result, Section 123(3) will become a dead letter.

In my view to equate Hindutva as synonymous with Indianisation is to do violence to the ethos and elan of India which is an amalgam of multireligious and multicultural flowers with distinctiveness of each but yet forming one harmonious garland giving out a sweet fragrance of the principle of unity in diversity. In that context it is well to emphasise the sagacious words of Dr. Radhakrishnan that "no one religion should be given preferential status or unique distinction and that no one religion should be accorded special privileges in national life". Gandhiji was even more direct when he said "separate religions - Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism - are different rights converging on the same point. The Allah of Muslims is the same as the God of Christians and Ishwara of Hindus".

I fear that the latest Supreme Court judgement may be used by communal parties as a licence to invoke religion in the electoral battle. It is, therefore, essential to amend the law immediately to make it clear beyond doubt that mere asking for vote by a candidate on the ground of his religion, whether Hinduism, Islam, Christianity or Sikhism etc.,... would be a corrupt practice within Section 123(3) of the Act. This must be done before the next General Elections.

and culture of non-Hindus.

... Culture includes religion, and that an appeal to vote on the basis of Hindutva includes an appeal to vote for the Hindu religion as well. Since an appeal to vote for Hindutva includes an appeal to vote for the Hindu religion, it clearly amounts to a corrupt practice as defined by Section 123(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. ... The present three-judge Bench was therefore wrong in holding that an appeal for votes based on Hindutva or Hinduism does not by itself amount to a corrupt practice...

These decisions of the Supreme Court Bench are thus highly derogatory to the principle of secular democracy and the letter and spirit of Section 123(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. It is to be hoped that a larger Bench of the Supreme Court will on a future occasion reconsider these decisions and undo the great harm caused by them.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 10 March, 1996)

MHA: Annual Report 1995-96 (Salient Extracts)

Ayodhya Issue-Revived Title Suits

2.1 The Supreme Court vide its judgement dated 24 October 1994 in the proceedings relating to the validity of the acquisition of Certain Area at Ayodhya Act and the maintainability of the Presidential Reference had upheld the validity of the Act, but for the provisions relating to the abatement of the pending suits, which stood revived. In compliance with the above mentioned judgement, appropriate arrangements have been made for maintenance of the status-quo in the disputed areas and management of the acquired property.

2.2 Following the Supreme Court judgement, proceedings in all the revived pending title suits resumed before the Special Full Bench of Allahabad High court at Lucknow since December 1994. Parties to these title suits filed a number of applications for amendment of plaints and impleadment of Union of India/Authorised Person therein. The Union of India opposed the move for its impleadment. The Hon'ble High Court allowed some amendments to the plaints but rejected the prayers for impleadment and held that Union of India is not necessary party in the pending suits. The hearing in these suits is continuing.

CBI Investigation into RJB-BM demolition case

2.3 The CBI which had been entrusted with the investigation into the offences connected with the demolition of the RJB-BM structure on 6 December 1992 had filed a combined charge sheet against 40 persons before the Special Court at Lucknow. The Special Court has passed the committal order against all the accused and sent the case to the Court of Special Additional Sessions Judge, Lucknow for trial and proceedings. The matter is thus subjudice. In the meantime, the CBI, with due permission of the Court, has conducted further investigations in the case and has filed supplementary charge-sheet before the Special Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate, Lucknow against 9 more persons on 18 January, 1996.

Liberhan Ayodhya Commission of Inquiry

2.4 Proceedings before the Liberhan Ayodhya Commission of Inquiry set up to enquire, inter-alia, into the sequence of events leading to the occurrences in the RJB-BM complex at Ayodhya on 6 December 1992 continue. The Central Government has produced extensive material before the Commission on its term of reference. The evidence of Central Government closed on 28 October, 1994. Subsequently the Government of UP was asked by the Commission to lead evidence it, however, led no evidence. Thereupon, the Commission directed certain officers of the Government of Uttar Pradesh to file affidavits and records relating to the

subject matter of inquiry, which they did.

2.5 On the basis of the evidence of Central Government and other records with the Commission, the Commission issued section 8B notices to 41 persons and five organisations viz., Bharatiya Janata Party, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Shiv Sena, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal. Most of the noticees submitted relevant material/evidence on the basis of which Section 8B notices have been issued to them. The Commission rejected these applications. Some of the noticees have filed petitions in the Delhi High Court and the Lucknow Bench of Allahabad High Court challenging the order of the Commission; the matters are pending before the Courts.

Banning of Communal Organisation

2.6 Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) was declared as an unlawful association vide notification S.O. 41(E) dated 14.1.1995, under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (the Act). An Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal, presided over by Shri Justice K. Ramamoorthy, a sitting Judge of Delhi High Court, was constituted to adjudicate whether there was sufficient cause for declaring this association as an unlawful association. The Hon'ble tribunal vide order dated 20.6.1995 has cancelled the notification declaring VHP as an Unlawful Association. The Government has filed SLP in the Supreme Court on 7.8.1995 against the judgement of the Tribunal and SLP has been admitted. No date for hearing has been fixed as yet.

National Integration Council

2.7 A meeting of the Standing Committee of the NIC was held in August, 1995 to discuss Kashi Vishwanath Temple-Gyanvapi Mosque at Varanasi and Krishna Janma Bhoomi-Shahi Idgah Mosque (KJB-SIM) Mathura issues.

2.8 The Government of India has been giving every year financial assistance to eligible voluntary organisations to promote national integration and communal harmony to achieve the objectives contained in the declaration of the meeting of National Integration Council, 1968. ...

Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act

2.13 Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1987 was allowed to lapse on 23rd May, 1995. However, keeping in view the reach, size and magnitude of terrorist violence in India and the aid, assistance and connivance from across the border to the anti national elements, the Government introduced the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 1995 in the Rajya Sabha. Efforts are being made to reach a consensus. As per the directions of the Supreme Court the Central Government as well as

State Governments have constituted Review Committees. The meeting of these Review Committees are being held periodically. and each and every case is being reviewed periodically. The cases involving terrorist violence are being registered under the relevant provisions of IPC and other Acts in absence of TADA.

Human Rights

3.1 Government of India have been following a policy of complete transparency in human rights matters. To this end, Government have facilitated visits of a number of foreign Parliamentarians, Diplomats and Journalists and Tourists to various parts of the country particularly the States of Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir. ...

3.2 A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Government of India and International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) on June 22, 1995 to provide access to ICRC to jails and detention centres in Jammu & Kashmir. In pursuance of this MOU, ICRC visits to the jails and detention centres has commenced on October 30, 1995...

3.3 ... Considerable stress is being laid on human rights by the Central Para Military Forces in the syllabi of their training capsules. Joint seminars/training programmes are also being organised by the Central Para Military Forces in collaboration with ICRC and NHRC. So far the Border Security Force has organised six seminars and workshops in collaboration with the ICRC.

3.4 During the current year till January 1996, the National Human Rights Commission has registered 7898 complaints of alleged human rights violations. During this period, 3657 complaints have been rejected in limini as not concerned with human rights and 1012 disposed of with directions. The Commission admitted 2958 cases for inquiry during this period. A total of 621 cases have been concluded during this period.... With a view to promote human rights literacy in the country, the Commission is having continuous dialogue, with the Ministry of Human Resource Development, NCERT, UGC, IGNOU and AICTE for inclusion of human rights as a subject in the educational curricula at school, college and university levels. The Commission has organised a seminar on Human Rights Education on 16.2.1996 at New Delhi jointly with the Canadian Human Rights Commission. The Commission is also evolving a model training syllabus for the training of police and security force personnel in consultation with Directors General of Police of States. The Commission is also focussing its attention on matters relating to prison reforms... Other major areas engaging the attention of the Commission are custodial death, rape and torture; problem of the child abuse; bonded labour and rights of women. ...

Rapid Action Force

5.5 RAF was raised in December, 1991 to deal with

communal situations in a non-partisan and objective manner and to render succour to innocent victims ravaged by riots. In a short period RAF has established its secular image.

Foreign Contribution

During the year 1995, 871 associations were registered under the provisions of Section 6 of the said Act and prior permission were accorded to 529 associations... Three associations have been prohibited from accepting and utilizing the foreign contribution and in the case of another three associations, prohibitory orders were revoked after reappraisal of their performance and rectification of deficiencies to the satisfaction of the competent authority. Three registered associations, who have been found to have contravened the provisions of the said Act and Rules framed thereunder have been required to accept any foreign contribution only with the prior permission of the Central Government, in future. ...

Government Statement On Cross-border Terrorism by Pakistan New Delhi, 29 February, 1996

It is no surprise that Pakistan has chosen to reject our closely documented protest against growing incidents of cross-border terrorism/narco-terrorism. Furthermore, Pakistan has made completely baseless, false and malicious accusations about India's support to certain groups in Pakistan. Such a response is in keeping with Pakistan's policy of denying its support for efforts to spread terror and disorder in India while, at the same time, vigorously aiding and abetting groups engaged in such activities.

We have through our aide memoire drawn Pakistan's attention to the infiltration of terrorists and the despatch of arms, ammunition, explosives and narcotics into India. The Indian authorities have discerned a marked increase in the tempo of such Pakistani activities over the past six months. Some specific cases were brought to Pakistan's notice. ...

Pakistan cannot move the spotlight away from the path of confrontation and hostility it has pursued against India. Having failed in its designs in Punjab and with the tide having turned against its endeavours in Kashmir, Pakistan has stepped up its efforts to promote narco-terrorism, subversion and violence by pushing arms and ammunition to disaffected and extremist elements in India. Such activities must cease immediately.

India will take all necessary steps to defend its interests and its security.

Aunohita Mojumdar's Situation Report

"An issueless man takes even a pup to his lap" goes a saying in Kashmir and the Centre's decision to hold talks with the four former militants appears to fit the bill.

... The Centre is now grabbing at whatever straws are available... even if the straws have been floated by the Centre itself as the All-Party Hurriyat Conference suggests....

The Hurriyat remains today the only body with any claims to representation of the people of the Valley and its leaders; the only ones who can still roam at will in places from where leaders of national mainstream parties have long since fled.

The group of four which offered to talk are "leaders" who were involved neither in any political activity nor had any rapport with the public in the months since their release.

Few in the Valley know what they were doing in the past four months...

The public mood is one of silence, a wait and watch attitude to see what the Hurriyat leadership will do. There has been no rejection of the Hurriyat leadership yet, nor any popular acceptance of these four leaders that the Government hopes will solve the Kashmir problem for them.

The offer of talks, the criticism of the Hurriyat and the notices issued under the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act may in fact act as a catalyst to the Hurriyat, which has awoken from a complacency born of the fact that there is no alternative to them....

While the Hurriyat leadership claims that its activities have been curtailed by the excessive use of force by the Indian Government, the fact remains that no new initiative has emerged from the leadership in the past 10 months.

In fact, the Hurriyat leaders do not deny that theirs has been an inactive existence but defend it. "The people should tell us what..."

The younger leaders, Mr. Shabir Shah and Mr. Umar Farooq, accept the need for new initiative and Mr. Shah states that there is a need for a unified party rather than an umbrella organization.

Irrespective of whether or not the group of four are indeed part of a set-up by the Indian Government as is being claimed by the Hurriyat, it makes little sense to talk to leaders who have not rebuilt their bridges with the people of the Valley after they were freed from jail.

The Government's declaration of holding talks with the leaders perhaps counts on the widespread ignorance of the situation and conditions in the Valley, giving the Government a chance to project anyone and everyone as a leader.... Even though his influence may be limited to the four walls of his house.

The four leaders, whatever their credentials, do not have any following in the Valley... In fact, having abandoned militancy and taking no subsequent part in the movement they are certainly not representatives of the

"problem" that the Centre has to deal with. ...

The situation in the Valley today is one of startling contrasts, of normalcy vying with terror, of peace and militancy, of rapport and hostility. Underlying this is an uncertainty about which way the tide will turn...

In Baramullah town, there are no militants left, says a Colonel... of Rashtriya Rifles... That his assertion is not an empty boast is apparent. In Baramullah, the Army officers are walking down the main street without any escorts, a fact which could not have been imagined a year ago.

In Pampore town, the Namlabal locality... has been at the receiving end of repeated attacks by counter-insurgency groups...

The only inhabitants of the locality... are the sarkari militants... "Renegades", "counter-insurgents" or "friendlies", as they are termed, the presence of these extra-legal authorities ensures that every resident refuses to go inside the locality.

The residents say they have no one to complain to since the arson and firing were done with the full connivance of the security forces...

The tale of Pampore is not an isolated one. Tales of abuses by "sarkari militants" are found throughout Pulwama and Anantnag districts where the new terror has intensified in the past two to three months. ... The terror is heightened by the fact that there is no perceivable redress...

The idea of elections is a laughable proposition in Anantnag... Authorities do not even recognize the terror...

Abuse of powers by counter-insurgency groups is the new threat in the Valley that security agencies are trying to cope with. Having provided full support to these groups which not only participated in counter-insurgency operations but also operated independently, the security forces now find themselves facing a new terror - one of their own making.

Widespread reports of extortion, intimidations and excesses committed by these groups have been pouring in from several districts where these groups are said to be in control....

The improving security scenario in the State is being threatened now by the "renegades" whose misdeeds are likely to escalate even as the situation improves....

The renegades are in no mood to retreat quietly. Having had power which enjoyed a semblance of legality through tacit support from the authorities, the renegades are now loath of part with it.

The result is a vicious circle. The forces which want to build a rapport and rebuild a tarnished image can no longer afford to be seen supporting illegal power. However, even as they withdraw support to counter-insurgents, the outlaws are stepping up abuses to assert control. Since the renegades are seen as an extension of the security forces, their abuses in turn negate all efforts on the part of the forces to secure public support.

For the Catch 22 situation the security forces have only

themselves to blame...

Not a single militant of the largest counter-insurgency group, the Ikhwan-ul-Muslimoon, headed by Kukka Parrey, has ever been either caught or killed in an encounter by the forces in all these years. ...

Sooner or later... the forces to preserve the gains they have made, will in all likelihood be forced to move against the renegades they had earlier used.

... Once re-declared militants it is only a matter of time before they are eliminated.

... But behind the numbers will lie a sordid tale of the forces fighting an illegal force of their own making.

... The Centre... appears content to hold on to the Valley through military control and is loth to take any step towards a permanent resolution of the crisis...

So far, it has shown no signs of going beyond the two options of military control and elections... Though the hiatus between military control and the initiation of a democratic process is wide, there have been no attempts to bridge it.

Till date, the Centre has been more interested in the appearance of solving the problem rather than actually solving it... Political substance has been entirely missing from the efforts of the Centre so far.

What makes an initiative imperative at this juncture is the fact that the forces have attained the maximum gains on the military front. Whatever could have been achieved has been achieved. The security forces assert that it is time now for a political process to consolidate the gains they have established. ...

Officers... admit in confidence that even if the Centre does agree to hold elections, there is no one left to contest them...

The Hurriyat, too, is looking towards the Centre for a change in attitude which it hopes will provide the answer. India, the Hurriyat leaders assert, should now realize that it cannot hold on to Kashmir indefinitely through military might. "It is the arrogance of military power that is making the Government so obstinate, says Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone. "The APHC wants, as the first step, talks with the leaders of Azad Kashmir (Pakistan-occupied Kashmir)". He criticizes the Government for its refusal to allow the talks in Nepal.

What is the Centre doing?" is a question echoed in all parts of the Valley... The army may have succeeded in tiring out the militants, but its continued presence may also tire out the people. Unless an initiative is taken soon, even the military control could slip away... the fear is reflected by Dr. Abdullah, who, during his announcement not to participate in elections in November last year, had cautioned the Centre against waiting for too long to grant autonomy, otherwise there will be "no one to sell it and no one to buy it".

Right now, the situation in the Valley is in a state of flux where the onus is on the Centre... Kashmir is waiting but not for the sporadic speeches on the holding of elections or talks that goes by the name of a political initiative. ...

(Source: The Statesman, 15 - 18 March, 1996)

J&K Mahaz-e-Azadi Leader, Azam Inquilabi Calls for Stop to Repression

Kashmir is on fire. The situation in Kashmir is absolutely appalling, gruesome and loathsome. Corpses of dozens of people killed everyday and debris of the houses burnt by Indian security forces present a horrible and ghastly look. The tale of human rights abuse and violations is, in fact, ineffable. Cynicism, hatred, acrimony and xenophobia is the hallmark of present-day Kashmir. The barbarian attitude of the Indian security forces in Kashmir falsifies your claim that Kashmir is an integral part of India, because no civilised government can afford to humiliate and brutalise its own subjects... To create total chaos, anarchy and uncertainty... the armed religious zealots from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Sudan find an excuse to intervene in Kashmir in a big way. In New Delhi people having a myopic approach to the Kashmiri crisis believe that Kashmir is fast heading towards peace and tranquility whereas the people with prudence and insight believe that it is only a lull before the storm.

Pakistan, as a party to the Kashmir issue, is engaged in non-conventional war in Kashmir. So while seeking a peaceful, honourable and practicable solution of the Kashmir issue you are supposed to take Pakistan into confidence... People obsessed with romantic political ideas will continue to thwart the efforts to seek an early peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue.

... The status quo in Kashmir suits some of the Western countries but not India and Pakistan which will eventually come to harm due to the protracted guerrilla war in Kashmir.

... You should not be naive and complacent while assessing the ground realities in Kashmir... Governor Krishna Rao's talk of elections is nothing but a sophisticated political ploy to camouflage his failure to deliver the goods... The situation in Kashmir is quite explosive. It is the cautious, calculated, scientific and pragmatic approach alone which can help retrieve the situation there.

Let us rise to the occasion to look for genuine pacifists who have courage and capability to suggest and stress something original and objective regarding the final and lasting solution of the Kashmir issue. It is time to recognise the Kashmiris' ... stand ... vis-a-vis Kashmir if at all peace and prosperity is paramount and a priority in South Asia. We will continue to stress our inalienable and unfettered right to self-determination.

We feel highly indebted to the progressive political forces of India which condemn atrocities and military repression in Kashmir. Parties to the Kashmir crisis should be serious about talks and negotiations for settlement... India... should take an initiative to mitigate the sufferings of the people there. So (it should) release the thirty thousand political activists from captivity, withdraw army and remove bunkers from cities and towns, stop state terrorism and massacre of the innocent people. This is the minimum prerequisite for any meaningful discussion, informal and formal, on Kashmir.

(Source: The Mainstream, 30 March, 1995)

Supreme Court On Local Authority

Housing Board of Haryana, Appellant v. Haryana Housing Board Employees Union and others, Respondents.

KULDIP SINGH AND S. SAGHIR AHMAD, JJ.

Haryana Housing Board Act (1971), Section 72 - "Local Authority" - Haryana Housing Board - Have no semblance of independence normally possessed by local self Government - Is not "Local Authority" within meaning of Section 32 (iv).

... Article 12 of the Constitution contains the definition of "State" which is an inclusive definition and includes Government and Parliament of India, Government and the Legislature of each of the State as also all local or other Authorities. Article 12 does not define "Local Authority" but defines "State". The attempt of the Board to invoke the rule of ejusdem generis which cannot be permitted. While interpreting the definitions of "Local Authority" contained in the two Acts, namely, the General Clauses Act and the Haryana Housing Board Act, 1971, the rule of ejusdem generis can be invoked but this rule cannot be applied to Article 12 as the definition of "State" in this Article includes several bodies which are heterogeneous in character and, there is no genus in the definition.

(Source: AIR 1996 Supreme Court 434)

Himachal Pradesh High Court On Overstay by Foreigners

Fred Howard Haering, Petitioner v. State of Himachal Pradesh and others, Respondents.

V. RATNAM, C.J. AND A.L. VAIDYA, J.

Foreigners Act (31 of 1946), Section 3(2) - Deportation for overstaying - Foreigner with limited leave to enter or remain in country - Not registering himself as per provisions of Act or Rules - No application made for extension of stay before expiry of period of visa - Order of deportation passed against him - Does not suffer from any infirmity or irregularity - No violation of principles of natural justice as there was nothing, on which foreigner was required to be heard - Fact that his efforts for developing business in country, in terms of money as well as time, would be wasted - Cannot be a ground for quashing order. ...

(Source: AIR 1996 Himachal Pradesh 27)

The minorities perceive that Narasimha Rao is responsible for the Babari Masjid demolitin and so don't want him.

- C.K. Jaffer Sharief

Delhi High Court On 'Other Authority' and 'State'

M/s Sanghi Technologies Pvt. Limited, Petitioner v. Union of India and others, Respondents.

M. JAGANNADHA RAO, C.J., ARUN KUMAR AND D.K. JAIN, JJ.

Constitution of India, Articles 12, 226 - "Other Authority" - Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts - Constitution of body and articles of deed of declaration of trust speaks volumes about Government's all pervasive control over it - Thus it is an instrumentality of State and hence "other authority" within meaning of Article 12 - Amenable to writ jurisdiction under Article 226.

... 18. The Bench deciding that case came to that conclusion basically on the ground that: (i) the main object of the Trust cannot be regarded as governmental functions as the object, referred to in the order, appearing in one of the clauses of the objects, postulating analysis of the data and information and the supply of the same to scholars etc. would not mean that the Centre is discharging any governmental functions; (ii) there was no pervasive control of the Government and (iii) the case was similar to NCERT's case (AIR 1992 SC 76) (supra). With respect, it appears, that the fundamental and most important heads of the objects of the Trust, ... pervasive control of the Government of India is clearly visible.

19. Though given the form of Trust, spelt out as an autonomous body, as observed in Ajay Hasia's case (AIR 1981 SC 487) (supra), we feel, it is really the Government which acts through the instrumentality or agency of respondent NO.2 and the juristic veil of an autonomous body worn for the purpose of convenience of management and administration cannot be allowed to obliterate the true nature of the reality behind which is the Government and if the Government acting through its officers is subject to certain constitutional limitations, it must follow a fortiori that the Government acting through the instrumentality or agency of a corporation or any other form should equally be subject to the same limitations.

20. In view of the foregoing discussion we are of the considered view that IGNCA, respondent No. 2, is an instrumentality of the State and hence "other authority" within the meaning of Article 12 of the Constitution and thus, amenable to writ jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution of India. The question referred to us is answered accordingly. ...

(Source: AIR 1996 Delhi 74)

Delhi Government considered buffalo meat as beef.
- M.L.Khurana, BJP Leader

Allahabad High Court**On Ceiling on Land of Separated Couple**

Sita Devi and etc. Petitioners v. Additional Commissioner, Agra Division, Agra and others, Respondents.

PARITOSH K. MUKHERJEE, J.

U.P. Imposition of Ceiling on Land Holdings Act (1 of 1961), Section 12 - Surplus land - Determination - Judicial separation between husband and wife and partition of property affected thereof, not considered - Clubbing of wife's property together with land of her former husband for purpose of determining surplus - Improper - Matter remanded for reconsideration.

(Source: AIR 1996 Allahabad 75)

Bombay High Court**On Muslim Divorcee's Rights**

Smt. Hafijabi S. Darwajkar, Petitioner v. Suleman M. Darwajkar and another, Respondents.

A.S. VENKATACHALA MOORTHY, J.

Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act (25 of 1986), Section 7 - Maintenance application pending before court on the commencement of the Act - Meaning of - Application disposed of on 1.10.1984 but revision application pending when Act came into force - Held revision application being continuation of proceeding would be governed by the provisions of the new Act.

(Source: AIR 1996 Bombay 79)

Karnataka High Court**On Limitation on Wakf Property**

The Karnataka Wakf Board, Appellant v. State of Karnataka and others, Respondents.

K.B. NAVADGI AND C.N. ASWATHANARAYANA RAO, JJ.

... Wakf Act (29 of 1954), Section 4(3) - Enquiry under - Nature of - Wakf Board publishing list of wakfs - Government claiming to be owner of certain property shown as dargah, challenging list of wakf published under Section 5 as not legal - Duty of Board - It should have proved by adducing satisfactory evidence that valid enquiry was held and Government plaintiff, had notice thereof, by placing records before trial Court.

... Section 6 - Limitation of one year Applicability - It applies to suit by Mutawalli of wakf or person interested in wakf - Government challenging inclusion of certain property in list of wakf - Plaintiff Government cannot be said to be interested in wakf - It cannot be said to be bound by said limitation....

(Source: AIR 1996 Karnataka 55)

Government Statement**On Meeting of State Ministers of Welfare**

The Conference of State/UT Ministers incharge of Social Welfare, Tribal Welfare, Backward Classes and Minorities Welfare and Handicapped Welfare will be held in New Delhi on 2-3 September, 1996 to review the progress of implementation of the Welfare Programmes for SCs/STs, OBCs, Minorities, Handicapped etc., being implemented through the State Governments.

(Source: LSUQ No. 834 dated 7 March, 1996 by B.B. Ramaiah)

Conclusions of the Conference of State Ministers of Welfare (Relevant Extracts)

... States/UTs need to take effective steps for improving the implementation of 15-Point programme for removing the feeling of alienation and creating greater sense of security in minority communities. This programme may also be updated to include developmental aspects more specifically.

State and UTs should monitor on a regular basis accrual of benefits to members of minority communities under various on-going development programmes and their access to opportunities for vocational training and entrepreneurial skills.

Pre-examination Coaching in physical fitness may be started for facilitating eligible minority candidates to compete on equal terms for jobs in police services and para-military forces.

Educational development programmes specially focussed on minority communities should be appropriately restructured for their more enthusiastic acceptance by the community.

Multi-sectoral plans for all minority concentration districts may be prepared most expeditiously.

The guidelines regarding payment of compensation to victims of communal riots may be given statutory sanction for their effective enforcement. Meanwhile, District Collectors may be authorised to draw money from Treasury under TR 27 for timely payment of compensation which may be subsequently recouped by appropriate budgetary allocation.

The State Wakf Boards should be reconstituted in terms of the provisions of the new Wakf Act for better maintenance, protection and development of wakf properties. ...

Government Statement**On Renaming of Ahmedabad**

... The Government of Gujarat has so far not sent any proposal for renaming 'Ahmedabad' as 'Karnavati'.

(Source: Home Minister, Govt. of India's Letter No. 11/28/95-M&G dated 1 March, 1996 to S. Shahabuddin)

The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Orders (Amendment) Bill, 1996

A Bill further to amend the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 etc...

Be it enacted by Parliament in the Forty-seventh Year of the Republic of India as follows:

1. This Act may be called the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Orders (Amendment) Act, 1996.

2. In paragraph 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, for the words "or the Buddhist", the words "the Buddhist or the Christian" shall be substituted.

Statement of Objects and Reasons

Converts to the Christian religion who are of the Scheduled Caste origin are precluded from the statutory benefits and safeguards accruing to members of the Scheduled Castes. Demands have been made from time to time for extending these benefits and safeguards to the Christians of the Scheduled Caste origin by granting them recognition as the Scheduled Castes on the ground that change of religion has not altered their social and economic conditions. Upon due consideration of these demands, it is proposed to amend the relevant Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Orders to include the Christian converts from the Scheduled Castes as the Scheduled Castes therein.

Hence this Bill.

New Delhi

The 11th March, 1996

SITARAM KESRI

Allahabad High Court On Regional Reservation

Manvendra Shah, Member of Parliament, Petitioner
v. State of U.P., Respondent.

RAVI S. DHAVAN AND A.B. SRIVASTAVA, JJ.

Constitution of India, Article 15 - Reservation in Schools and Colleges etc. in Kumaon and Garhwal divisions of State of Uttar Pradesh - People in the region suffers from backwardness not because of class conflict as usually understood but because of geographical necessities too unanimous resolutions of both houses of legislature of U.P. treating that region as distinct from rest approving it for grant of statehood - In view of aforesaid reasons, High Court directed that area formed by said two divisions be treated differently from the rest of U.P. in the matter of reservation of seats in educational institutions - Further, High Court, in keeping with law settled by decisions of apex Court, made suggestions in the matter providing reservation.

(Source: AIR 1996 Allahabad 92)

Supreme Court On Reservation in Promotion

Union of India and others etc., Appellants/Petitioners
v. Virpal Singh Chauhan etc., Respondents.

S.C. AGRAWAL AND B.P. JEEVAN REDDY, JJ.

Constitution of India, Article 16(4) - Reservation of posts in favour of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes - Operation of roster - It is to be given effect till number of posts reserved for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are filled by operation of roster - Determination of number - Candidates of reserved category selected on their own merit are not to be counted as reserved category candidates.

Reservation - Power of State - Nature of - It can provide that candidate promoted earlier by virtue of rule of reservation on roster shall not be entitled to seniority over his senior in feeder category and that when candidate senior to him in feeder category is promoted, he will regain his seniority over reserved candidate.

It is open to the State, if it is so advised, to say that while the rule of reservation shall be applied and the roster followed in the matter of promotions to or within a particular service, class or category, the candidate promoted earlier by virtue of rule of reservation/roster shall not be entitled to seniority over his senior in the feeder category and that as and when a general candidate who was senior to him in the feeder category is promoted, such general candidate will regain his seniority over the reserved candidate notwithstanding that he is promoted subsequent to the reserved candidate. There is no unconstitutionality involved in such provision. It is permissible for the State to so provide. ...

(Source: AIR 1996 Supreme Court 448)

Government Statement On 'Creamy Layer'

The Government have taken note of the recent order of the Supreme Court striking down the definition of the Creamy Layer among the Backward Classes by Kerala.

As per the judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Indira Sawhney and Others Vs. Union of India (known as Mandal Case), it was laid down the States shall also evolve their own criteria to exclude socially advanced persons/sections (Creamy Layer) from Other Backward Classes. The information regarding the States is not available with the Central Government. The Government do not propose to suggest uniform national criteria for the identification of the Creamy Layer...

(Source: LSUQ No. 972 dated 7 March, 1996 by S. Shahabuddin)

Government Statement

On Education Programme for Minorities

A National Monitoring Committee for Minorities Education under the Chairmanship of Minister for Human Resource Development was set up on the 28th July, 1995 to monitor the programme of educational development of the minorities... (vide) Resolution No. F.8-1/93-SC/ST dated the 28th July, 1995.

Composition:

- | | | |
|-------|---|------------------|
| i) | Union Minister of Human Resource Development | Chairman |
| ii) | Shri E.T. Mohammed Basheer, Education Minister, Kerala | Member |
| iii) | Dr. Girija Vyas, M.P.(Lok Sabha) | Member |
| iv) | Shri K.M. Khan, M.P.(Rajya Sabha) | Member |
| v) | Dr. Raj Bahadur Gour, Hyderabad | Member |
| vi) | Shri Imam-Ul-Haque, Chairman, Rajasthan Urdu Academy, Jaipur | Member |
| vii) | Dr. Khaliq Anjum Secretary, Anjuman Taraqui-Urdu-e-Hind, New Delhi | Member |
| viii) | Shri Anil Bordia, Former Education Secretary | Member |
| ix) | Member-Secretary, Minorities' Commission | Member |
| x) | Vice-Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi | Member |
| xi) | Secretary (School Education), Bihar, Patna | Member |
| xii) | Secretary (School Education), A.P., Hyderabad | Member |
| xiii) | Secretary (School Education), U.P., Lucknow | Member |
| xiv) | Secretary (School Education), J&K, Srinagar/Jammu | Member |
| xv) | Joint Secretary, Department of Education, Govt. of India, New Delhi | Member-Secretary |

Terms of Reference:

"To monitor the implementation of chapter 3 - Minorities' Education of the Programme of Action, 1992".

The tenure of office of the members of the committee, other than ex-officio members, shall be three years. ...

First meeting of the Committee was held on the 8th November, 1995. Necessary steps have already been initiated in terms of the discussions and decisions taken in that meeting.

(Source: LSSQ No. 82 dated 6 March, 1996 by R.K. Yadav & M.A.A. Fatmi)

Madras High Court

On Right to Higher Education

A. Balasubramaniam, Appellant v. The Secretary to Government Education Department and others, Respondents.

K.A. SWAMI, C.J. AND SOMASUNDARAM, J.

... Constitution of India, Article 48 - Education - Fundamental right as to - There is no fundamental right to claim higher education.

(Para 7)

... 7. The next question for consideration is whether the prescription of age limit can be held to be violative of Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution. As long as there is an avenue open to the diploma-holders who are age barred for the course in question, to pursue, their higher studies the question of their fundamental right under Article 21 being affected, does not arise. Moreover, it has been held in Unni Krishnan, J.P. v. State of A.P. (AIR 1993 SC 2178) that the fundamental right to education is guaranteed only up to the age of 14 years and not beyond that; in other words, there is no fundamental right to claim higher education. As far as Article 14 is concerned, it depends upon whether there is a power vested in the Authority to prescribe the age limit. This question is no more res integral. Division Bench of this Court in Nithiyan P. & P. Prasanna v. State of Tamil Nadu (1994 Writ LR 624) held that age limit can be prescribed for admission to educational courses. This has been approved by a Full Bench of this Court in Bhupeshkar (case). ...

(Source: AIR 1996 Madras 95)

Shubhangi Khapre

On Dalit Attack on Arun Shourie

His hard-hitting investigative reports may have shaken many thrones in the past, but for once, well-known columnist Arun Shourie had to face the thunder himself. On February 25, Mr. Shourie was taken by surprise when around ten Dalits stormed the Garware Institute at Pune and blackened his face, protesting his "false and vitriolic attack" on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

Mr. Shourie was to speak on "Corruption and Criminalisation in Politics". The function was organised by Gyanprabodhini, an organisation affiliated to the RSS (Sangh Parivar). Other speakers (included) retired bureaucrat B.G. Deshmukh...

... "Some persons speaking in the name of Dalits, Muslims, OBCs etc... have turned mediocrity into a norm, vulgarity a right, civility and reason to be veneered, standards, an elitist conspiracy and intimidation, to be argument. We are licensing these in the name of social revolution. If this goes on, no institution in this country can work".

Report of the Committee on Establishment of Urdu University, 1993 (Extracts)

Recommendations:

- (i) The proposed University should not be a conventional University. ... It is a more flexible and resilient pattern that is required.
- (ii) It should not be created by converting an existing University. The beginning has to be made on a clean slate. ...
- (iii) It should be based, with suitable changes and adaptations, on the pattern of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). ...
- (iv) The stress should be on Physical, Life and Social Sciences rather than on literature, although the last will not be excluded. ...
- (v) ... A number of important links in the chain of Urdu education have been broken over the last four and a half decades. It should be the endeavour... gradually to supply those links particularly in areas where primary and elementary education in Urdu, is not provided.
- (vi) ... The proposed University should be designed to give a shot in the arm to the teaching of Urdu and to integrate it with job-oriented courses.
- (vii) It should also have under its wing an Open School on the pattern of the National Open School.
- (viii) Although the University has necessarily to be located at one place, its benefits could be made to reach all areas where there is a substantial Urdu-speaking population. This could be done by opening Study Centres... These Centres could be effectively associated not only with collegiate education but also with vocational training...
- (ix) ... The target will be to start the first phase in July, 1994. The appointment of the Vice-Chancellor/OSD should be made well in advance...
- (x) The University will have to undertake translation work on a large scale... The Urdu University will be given the permission to translate the course material prepared by the Indira Gandhi National Open University... Experts may be engaged to take up independently the task of preparation of curricula...
- (xi) The University should teach three languages - Urdu, English, Hindi or a regional language as compulsory subjects... The regular faculty in the Urdu University should be minimal. The concept would be to have one eminent expert heading each discipline. He would be expected to collect around himself other experts as consultants.
- (xii) The medium of instruction except in the case of languages will be Urdu.
- (xiii) The jurisdiction of the proposed University should extend not only to the entire country but also to the constellations of the Urdu-speaking communities in Canada, USA, UK, Iran, Iraq, Gulf countries, Egypt, Afghanistan, Commonwealth of Independent States, Fiji, British West Indies and Mauritius. It should be possible for the University to open Study Centres in these countries...
- (xiv) The proposed University will also be authorised to affiliate colleges and institutions in India and abroad...
- (xv) The University will have a functional bias. One of its objectives will be to make people improve their existing skills and acquire new ones. Lessons on nutrition, health care, civic responsibility and national solidarity, conservation of environment will receive special attention.
- (xvi) The above programmes relating to Humanities, Social Sciences and Physical Sciences will be supplemented by research and development... One of the tasks to which the University may address itself would be bringing out Urdu language books for various disciplines. ...
- (xvii) The University may also be the nodal agency for providing financial assistance and academic guidance to Madrasas as under the proposed scheme of Modernisation of Madrasas Education.
- (xviii) ... Notwithstanding the predominantly 'Open' character... the Bill should contain an enabling provision which would allow the proposed University... to set up conventional residential and teaching institutions, particularly in the field of technical, vocational and professional courses etc.

Academic Priorities

... In the First Phase, the Committee, therefore, recommends the setting up of the following 7 Schools over the period 1993-94 to 1996-97:

1. School of Natural and Physical Sciences.
2. Schools of Commerce and Business Management.
3. School of Computer Application and Informatics, Distance Education and Industrial Training.
4. School of Journalism and Mass Communication.
5. School of Education and Teachers' Training.
6. School of Humanities, Social and Behavioural Sciences.
7. School of Languages, Linguistics and Indology.

The Committee recommends that all possible efforts should be made to initiate action to start the above mentioned Schools from the academic session of 1994 in a phased manner. The process must be completed by 1996-97... The proposed university must accord high priority to the Thrust Areas which are germane to social-economic development of Urdu-speaking population in the country.

The university must constantly assess the socio-economic situation in the country and its different regions

before deciding upon its academic programmes, research and extension in order to ensure that there is no conflict between the academic equipment of its students and the employment opportunities. The courses should be need-based and intake of students tailored to the quantum of need. ...

The National Policy on Education envisages that in order to equip the students with a wider awareness of subjects like National Integration, Unity of Religions, Democracy and Secularism, Freedom Movement of the country etc. foundation courses must be introduced at the university level for students joining the institutions....

The Committee feels that the proposed university while selecting Schools to be opened on priority during the 9th Plan would do well to consider the following in addition to the Schools mentioned in the Interim Report:

1. School of Art and Culture.
2. School of Physical Education and Sports.
3. Centre of Peace Studies and Gandhian Thoughts.
4. Centre of Development Studies.

The proposed university should ensure prompt action to achieve the above objectives. ...

The most vexed question which the Committee had to handle was the location of the University... The main contenders are Aligarh, Patna, Lucknow, Bhopal, Madras, Rampur, Bombay, Bangalore, Delhi and Hyderabad.

The claim of Aligarh is based partly on the possible conversion of Jamia Urdu which is imparting distance education and partly on its being the seat of the Aligarh Muslim University and of the Urdu Movement...

Bombay... has a vast network of Urdu medium schools... Because of the film industry, Bombay has continued to attract eminent Urdu poets and writers. It has a vigorous Urdu Press. ...

Bhopal is also in the zone of consideration, having a central geographical location well-connected with all parts of the country, a sizeable concentration of Urdu-speaking population and old linguistic traditions.

Bangalore, the city of gardens, is another serious contender. Karnataka like Maharashtra has a vast network of Urdu medium schools. The State Government's cooperation is assured. The Chief Minister of Karnataka Shri Veerappa Moily offered 200 acres of land in Bangalore for the proposed University... He has very kindly offered the building of National College in Bangalore city for the immediate use of the Urdu University to run its office etc. ...

Some of the members were of the view that Delhi would be the ideal location. The new University has to evolve according to a constellation of requirements. It has to adjust its sights as it proceeds. It would be a unique institution in that it would have an immense catchment area, it would have to supply to the language many of the links that have unfortunately snapped over the years and it will also attempt in its limited way a socio-economic

uplift of the Urdu-speaking population. Altogether, this would be a new experiment which would require constant interaction with the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Doordarshan etc. Moreover, for an open Urdu University, it would be a great advantage to be in functioning in proximity to the Indira Gandhi National Open University, on which it would have to depend heavily during its formative years....

Hyderabad has had very old and purposive association with the development of Urdu. There is tremendous enthusiasm in Hyderabad.... The Government of Andhra Pradesh is also very keen ... and offered 500 acres of land next to the Hyderabad Central University area and facilities for temporary residential accommodation for the V.C. and other officers...

Patna would also be a good name but due to the peculiar development of the city along the Ganges and Urban congestion, it may be difficult to get a suitable plot of land there.

The Government of Tamil Nadu also offered some land in Siripermbudur and temporary accommodation in the Madras University...

... The Committee resolved to recommend the following places where Urdu University may be set up...in alphabetical order...

- (i) Bangalore
- (ii) Delhi
- (iii) Hyderabad

... The Committee unanimously recommends that the proposed University may be named as "Maulana Azad National Urdu University" (MANUU).

URDU: Expenditure on Advertisement by Ministry of Human Resource Development, 1992-93 and 1993-94

S.No.	Language	Amount Committed 1992-93	Amount Committed 1993-94	% Changed
1.	English	38,35,707	39,49,152	10.3
2.	Hindi	15,28,106	55,68,272	364.4
3.	Urdu	4,96,504	10,54,067	212.3
4.	Punjabi	75,869	3,11,379	410.4
5.	Marathi	1,50,910	5,83,216	386.5
6.	Gujarati	1,30,188	5,81,624	446.8
7.	Sindhi	13,398	32,103	239.6
8.	Assamee	57,386	1,50,354	262.0
9.	Bengali	2,22,390	6,90,909	310.7
10.	Oriya	64,289	2,73,482	423.8
11.	Tamil	99,049	3,12,579	315.6
12.	Telugu	84,261	3,07,881	365.4
13.	Malayalam	1,08,032	3,79,920	351.7
14.	Kannada	73,830	2,67,375	362.1
	Total	69,39,919	1,44,62,313	208.4

(Source: RSUQ No. 2530 dated 12 August, 1994 by M. Afzal)

Ali Sardar Jafri

Supports Dev Nagri Script for Urdu

In a very friendly dialogue with the Urdu poet Ali Sardar Jafri... I asked him bluntly why the Urdu lobby does not accept reading and writing of the language in Dev Nagri or Roman script. His reply was revealing and deserves serious consideration of propagators of Hindi as the sole national language of India. If the impasse between Hindi and Urdu can be resolved, the language battle could be won as far as northern India is concerned. Said Ali Sardar Jafri, "If champions of Hindi are willing to reintroduce the use of the bindi (dot) when using Urdu words in Dev Nagri and poets like Meer Taqi Meer and Ghalib are included in textbooks of schools and colleges, I for one will be willing to accept Urdu or Hindustani being written and read in Devnagri".

What Ali Sardar says makes good sense... when Hindi papers and broadcasters deliberately drop the bindi and mispronounce Urdu words and Muslim names. What justification is there to make Mirza into Mirja?... Is there any logic in mutilating a language recognised by the Constitution?...

The second point taken up by Ali Sardar Jafri is even weightier. Meer, Ghalib, Daagh, Zauq, Zafar, Iqbal, Firaq, Josh and other Urdu poets are a part of our literary heritage.... Sarey Jahan Say Achha Hindostan Hamaara... was written by Iqbal. Innumerable patriotic songs were composed in Urdu... They are in fact in Hindustani and easily understandable... Is there any explanation besides anti-Muslim (most Urdu poets were and are Muslims) and... anti-Urdu prejudice? Those opposed to this accommodation for Urdu in Dev Nagri script owe the nation a rational explanation.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 30 March, 1996)

Shahabuddin's Reply, 31 March, 1996

Mr. Khushwant Singh's touching plea (30 March, 1996) for acceptance of Dev Nagri script for Urdu is like persuading a healthy person to commit suicide. First, adding Bindis to Dev Nagri script will not cure mispronunciation and Ghazal will still 'Gajal'! Secondly, Urdu is an international language and Urdu in India will not only be slowly absorbed by Hindi (as a style) but part company with Urdu in other countries like Pakistan, the Gulf, the UK and the USA. Even if a few Urdu poet are included in Hindi syllabus. Urdu-speaking people will be cut off from the valuable and massive heritage in Persian script.

The most appropriate answer still is Gandhiji's suggestion for Hindustani as the national language (first among equals) written in Dev Nagri and Persian scripts. Hindustani will evolve by using words from both Urdu and Hindi which have origin in Persian and Arabic and Sanskrit.

The script is an organic growth. Imposition fails as it has now in Central Asia.

Incidentally Iqbal's Sare Jahan Se Achha is neither our national anthem nor song!

Government Statement on Agencies Hiring Accommodation for Hajis

Accommodation for Indian Haj pilgrims in Saudi Arabia is hired by the Consulate General of India, Jeddah, with the good offices of the Moassassa of South Asian Countries constituted by the Government of Saudi Arabia.

The procedure followed is that the Building Renting Delegation of the Central Haj Committee holds discussions with the Saudi Minister of Haj and the Chairman of the Moassassa of South Asian Countries to decide the broad parameters... including the number of units to be hired, distance from the Haram Sharif and the rental to be charged. Subsequently, the Building Selection Team, consisting of representatives of State Haj Committees, goes to Saudi Arabia to assist the CGI, Jeddah, in the selection of buildings. Buildings are selected with the help of Moallims and long-lease holders approved by the Government of Saudi Arabia and the rental agreements are signed with the landlords/long-lease holders in the presence of the Moassassa.

No agent has been appointed by the Central Haj Committee for hiring accommodation.

While some press reports have appeared, no specific case has come to notice.

Further Statement of Minister of External Affairs during Discussion

... We are working on a comprehensive legislation to replace (the Haj Committee) Act or rather amend the Act of 1959. The consultation process is going on. I am sorry that it has taken much longer time than we intended it to. But we have reached the final stages of drafting the legislation.... Haj pilgrims are coming from different parts of the country and there are different embarkation points.

Therefore, the State Haj Committees should also have adequate representation and say in the Central Haj Committee. Keeping that objective in view, we are proposing to amend the (Act)... I do not know whether it will be possible during this Session, but as soon as possible, we would like to bring an amendment to the 1959 Act...

... As far as Government expenditure is concerned... the expenditure... in 1995 was Rs. 17.50 crores. In 1994, it was Rs. 24.69 crores; in 1993, it was Rs. 16.11 crores and in 1992, it was Rs. 14.43 crores. These are the figures of expenditure incurred by the Government in the last four years.

Haj pilgrimage is different from the other types of pilgrimages... This type of an event does not take place in any other religion. Therefore, this is not a comparable (Contd. on page 183)

Supreme Court

On Communal Propaganda in Election

D.R. Deshmukh, Appellant v. K.K.N. Kadam and others, Respondents

G.N. RAY AND FAIZAN UDDIN, JJ.

Representation of the People Act (43 of 1951), Section 123(3)(3A) - Corrupt practice - Display of posters, with permission of returned candidate, containing appeal to vote for him for purpose of "teaching a lesson to Muslims" - Amounts to corrupt practice under Section 123(3)(3A) - As such appeal is potentially offensive and is likely to rouse passion in minds of voters on communal basis - It is also likely to bring disharmony between two communities and offend the secular structure of the country.

Representation of the People Act (43 of 1951), Section 123(3)(3A) - Corrupt practice - Deciding question as to - Speeches delivered in election meetings by leaders of political parties - The real thrust of the speech would be considered by Court without labouring to dissect one or two sentences of the speech.

While deciding the question of corrupt practice speeches delivered in the election meeting by leaders of political parties should be appreciated dispassionately by keeping in mind the context in which such speeches were made. This Court has indicated a note of caution that in election speeches appeals are made by candidates of opposing political parties often in an atmosphere surcharged with partisan feelings and emotions. Use of hyperboles or exaggerated language or adoption of metaphors and extravagance of expression in attacking one party or a candidate are very common and Court should consider the real thrust of the speech without labouring to dissect one or two sentences of the speech, to decide whether the speech was really intended to generate improper passions on the score of religion, caste, community etc. In deciding whether a party or his collaborators had indulged in corrupt practice regard must be had to be substance of the matter rather than mere form or phraseology. ...

(Source: AIR 1996 Supreme Court 391)

(S.B.) Chavan pops off like that once a month or so on his own. He's an embarrassment to his colleagues in the Indian Government.

- State Department Spokesman

The presence of your majesty at this cathedral is a further confirmation of the role that we Catholics can play in this nation.

- Cardinal Basil Hume, Head of the Cathlic Church in England on Queen's visit, first in 400 years

Government Statement On Strength of R.A.F.

The sanctioned strength of Rapid Action Force is 13,180. The Force now consists of 10 Bns. located at Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Bombay, Delhi, Aligarh, Thiruvanthapuram, Jamshedpur, Bhopal and Meerut.

There is no direct recruitment for RAF, which is a part of CRPF. CRPF personnel are suitably screened and posted to RAF, which is a composite Force. The present representation of religious minorities and Scheduled Caste/Schedule Tribe in the RAF is as under:-

Religious minorities	-	17.21%
Scheduled Caste	-	13.64%
Scheduled Tribe	-	4.76%

RAF has been successful in achieving its basic objective, which is to deal with communal riots and riot-like situations in a non-partisan and objective manner, to instil confidence amongst all sections of the society and render succour in innocent victims ravaged by riots.

(Source: LSUQ No. 982 dated 7 March, 1996 by S. Gautam and R. Patidar)

Kuldip Nayar on Winding-up of Sri Krishna Commission of Inquiry

... It is... sad that the winding up of the Commission has come at a time when the country is enjoying a relatively good climate of communal harmony. Even the fundamentalists among Hindus and Muslims have been attracting less and less attention. Secularism looks like taking root in India. If the perpetrators of the Bombay killings were to go scot-free, the secular ethos of our country would come to be questioned all over again. The Sikhs are far from mollified... The Congress defended the carnage in Delhi with the remark that when a big tree fell, the earth trembled. The Shiv Sena-BJP Government has throttled the commission, which had finished four-fifths of its work, on the pretext that it had exhausted its tenure.

This will add to the unhappiness of Muslims as the lack of action has irritated the Sikhs. These two communities together constitute roughly 16 per cent of the population.

New Delhi will do well to appreciate the delicacy of the situation and constitute a central commission, requesting the Bombay High Court to reappoint Justice Sri Krishna to head it. This will give it a sense of continuity.

(Source: The Statesman, 28 February, 1996)

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will oppose any move by the Centre to concede the pre-1953 position in Jammu and Kashmir.

- K.L. Sharma, BJP Leader

Minorities Commission: Annual Report, 1988-1989

Conclusions and Recommendations

... The Commission firmly believes that religion and politics should be de-linked and that political parties based on religion should be banned in view of the secular character of the country. No support or scope should be given to fissiparous tendencies or for such situations which put up one community against the other. In this context, the Commission would reiterate that acts of terrorism must be dealt with sternly because terrorism was a menace which eroded the very basis of national integration. It was necessary to free the minds of the citizens from every type of bias, hatred, fear and prejudice which created barriers between communities or even between individuals.

... A beginning should be made by correcting the text books on history by removing its distortions and by stressing more on the good deeds done by one community into another. There should be a constant evaluation of text books. The Commission would go so far as to recommend that there should be one set of text books on history for the entire country.

The Commission hopes that voluntary organisations will play a greater role in the promotion of national integration by participating in the various religious festivals and the members of different faiths coming together for this purpose, exchange of cultural programmes between various regions; and economic development of all communities and regions on an equitable basis.

... All militant Wings/Senas, however well-meaning or well-intentioned they may be, should be banned, especially if they conducted drills... 'No permission be given for taking out new religious processions, and use of loudspeakers in religious places be totally banned except on public address system within the precincts of these. Their must also be control on the construction of new places of worship.

... A Special Task Force with adequate representation of various minority communities on it which would be free from any communal bias, would be useful to Civil authorities for instant deployment during emergency. The Commission has also recommended reactivating the old scheme of Peace Keeping Force in the CRPF which should be deployed as a composite unit... The Commission has also suggested that the Ministry of Home Affairs might suggest to the State having riot prone areas to raise similar special Peace Keeping battalions in their Armed Forces. Finally, the Commission attached the highest importance to the speedy and proper rehabilitation of riot victims.

... The Commission was pleased to note that an entire

Chapter, namely, Chapter XIV in the Programme of Action arising out of the National Policy on Education, was devoted to the education of the minorities... The Commission must record with a sense of regret that there had been little progress in this regard. Most of the schemes envisaged in Chapter XIV had not materialised nor had the State Governments taken the steps they were required to do. The Commission would recommend that the monitoring agency at the Centre and the State should be strengthened and that the Centre should ensure that the programmes included in Chapter XIV were speedily and properly implemented.

... The Commission is distressed to remark that Article 30 of the Constitution is being followed more in breach than in observance... The Commission would strongly urge the Central and State Governments to take immediate appropriate action in this regard according to a time-bound programme.

The Commission would suggest that there should be greater stress on vocational and technical education... Students should be prepared and equipped to appear in competitive examinations. For this purpose, there should be greater expansion and coverage of the UGC Scheme of coaching classes and more States should be encouraged to avail of it.

The Third Conference of the Chairmen and Members of the Central and State Minorities Commissions/Boards was held on November 17-18, 1988....

The Conference decided to request the Ministry of Welfare and Bureau of Public Enterprises to undertake monitoring of representation of minorities in Services.

It approved the suggestion that the State Minorities Financial Corporations might mobilise funds from various welfare institutions and individuals living inside the country and from non-resident Indians and resolved that the Government of India be requested to accord permission for the same....

With regard to the implementation of the three-language formula, the consensus was that it was not being implemented faithfully in most States. Hence, it resolved to pursue the matter with the States concerned...

Reserve Bank of India's Direction to All Public Sector Banks, 24 July, 1986 On Credit Facilities to Minority Communities

... We have to advise you to take following steps for monitoring flow of credit to minority communities:

- (1) A Special Cell should be set up in each bank.
- (2) Steps taken to facilitate the flow of credit to the minority communities and the progress made should be reviewed regularly at the meetings of the District

Consultative Committees and the State Level Bankers Committees.

- (3) There should be good publicity about various anti-poverty programmes of the Government wherever there is large concentration of minority communities and particularly in 10 districts listed as having concentration of minority communities. A copy of the list of these 40 districts will be sent to you separately.
- (4) The Lead Bank in each of these 40 districts should have an officer who shall exclusively look after the problems regarding the credit flow to minority communities. It shall be his responsibility to publicise among the minority communities various programmes of bank credit and also to prepare suitable schemes for their benefit in collaboration with branch managers.

We shall be glad if you will please take necessary action in the matter and also issue suitable instructions to your Lead Bank Officers/District Coordinators of the concerned districts immediately. ...

Educationally Backward Minority Dominated Districts

States	Districts
U.P.	1. Rampur, 2. Bijnor, 3. Moradabad, 4. Saharanpur, 5. Muzaffarnagar, 6. Meerut, 7. Bahraich, 8. Gonda, 9. Ghaziabad, 10. Pilibhit, 11. Deoria, 12. Barabanki, 13. Basti
W. Bengal	14. Murshidabad, 15. Malda, 16. West Dinajpur, 17. Birbhumu, 18. Nadia, 19. 24-Parganas, 20. Cooch-Bihar, 21. Howrah,
Kerala	22. Malapurram, 23. Kozhikode, 24. Cannanore, 25. Palghat, 26. Wyanad
Bihar	27. Purnea, 28. Katihar, 29. Darbhanga
Karnataka	30. Bidar, 31. Gulbarga, 32. Bijapur
Maharashtra	33. Greater Bombay, 34. Aurangabad
A.P.	35. Hyderabad, 36. Kurnool
Haryana	37. Gurgaon
M.P.	38. Bhopal
Rajasthan	39. Jaisalmer
Gujarat	40. Kachch

Government Statement

On Mazar of Bahadur Shah Zafar

The Mazar of Bahadur Shah Zafar as well as the memorial hall adjoining the Mazar have been maintained appropriately. Government have provided funds for maintenance and renovation of the Mazar and construction of the Memorial Hall which was inaugurated in December, 1994. The entire complex is now maintained by a Supervisory Committee appointed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Government of Myanmar.

(Source: LSUQ No. 1222 dated 11 March, 1996 by M.H. Gavit)

Second National Conference on Reservation For Muslims in Employment and Education

The Second National Conference of the Association for Promoting Education and Employment of Muslims held in New Delhi on 2 March, 1996.

- * Recalling the Resolution adopted at the First Conference held in October, 1994 which placed the question of Reservation for the Muslim community in public employment on the national agenda.
- * Thanking the intelligentsia and the Press for the public discourse on the subject.
- * Consent with the under-representation of the Muslim community in public employment in the Centre and in all the States/U.Ts.
- * Considering that their higher representation would serve to reduce the level of alienation and motivate the community to invest in education and training of their children and thus enable them to make an effective contribution to national development.
- * Unanimously reiterate its demand for the declaration of the Muslim community, as a community, as a Backward Class, in the Constitutional meaning of the term both in the country as a whole and in various States/UTs, and extension of reservation for public employment to the Muslim community in proportion to its population and level of backwardness both in higher and professional education as well as public employment, at the central and state level.
- * Demands, a separate quota for the Muslim community as it does for all identifiable communities so that they may enjoy full benefit of the rightful share of reservation.
- * Concedes that Muslim sub-communities which have already been declared as Backward Class by the Central or State Governments shall have the first claim on the Muslim quota while only the remaining unutilised quota shall be available for the other communities.
- * Is of the view that the selection of the beneficiaries of reservation quotas should be subjected to test of creamy layer so that the impact of reservation percolates to the lowest strata of the community.
- * Appeals to the Central and State Governments as well as to the various recognised national and State political Parties to support this legitimate demand of the Muslim community.
- * Requests the National and State Minorities Commissions as well as National and State Backward Class Commissions to extend their full cooperation and support.

Government Statement On Armed Forces Act

The Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Act, 1958 was enacted by Parliament in the Ninth Year of Republic of India. It was amended by the Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers (Amendment) Act, 1972. The amended Act extended to the whole of the States of Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura and the Union Territories of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. By the State of Mizoram Act, 1986, in the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, in the long title and in sub-section (2) of Section 1, for the words "Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura and the Union territories of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram", the words "Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura and the Union Territories of Arunachal Pradesh" were substituted. Further, by the State of Arunachal Pradesh Act, 1986, in the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, in the long title and in sub-section (2) of section 1, for the words "Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura and the Union territory of Arunachal Pradesh", the words "Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura" were substituted.

The Armed Forces (Punjab and Chandigarh) Special Powers Act, 1983 is in force in the State of Punjab and Union Territory of Chandigarh with effect from 15th October, 1983.

In the State of J&K, the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990 is in force with effect from 5th July, 1990. In accordance with the provisions of the aforesaid Acts, Part or whole of the States including the Union Territory of Chandigarh to which these Acts apply may be notified as "disturbed area".

At present, the following States or part thereof stand notified as "disturbed area": Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Punjab, J&K and Union Territory of Chandigarh. The situation is kept under constant watch and review for determining the continuance of the concerned areas as "disturbed area".

(Source: LSUQ No. 376 dated 29 February, 1996 by S. Shahabuddin)

(Contd. from page 179)

situation. ...

The Government have certain expenditure on the official delegations whose job is not only to overview the arrangements... but also... to make our viewpoints known because a large number of Islamic countries are represented in this pilgrimage and sometimes the delegations are of a very high political level. Therefore, we considered it necessary that if we send the official delegations to have interaction with them during those days, then it will be possible for us to place our viewpoints before the people on many issues. The expenditure incurred.. was Rs. 30 lakhs in 1991 and it went up to Rs. 1.22 crores in 1995....

(Source: RSSQ No. 82 dated 6 March, 1996 by K.R. Khan)

Government Statement On Review Committees for Releasing Persons Detained under TADA

... As per the directions of the Supreme Court, the Central Government as well as the State Governments have constituted Review Committees. The meetings of these Review Committees are being held periodically and cases are being reviewed regularly. The Government of India is repeatedly emphasising the need to carry out this exercise expeditiously on priority.

S.No.	Name of States/UTs	No. of Persons released till 31.12.95 on Review (Only above 100)
1.	Andhra Pradesh	208
2.	Assam	2,229
3.	Bihar	754
4.	Gujarat	708
5.	Maharashtra	507
6.	Punjab	2,819
7.	U.P.	376
8.	Delhi	451
9.	Others	464
	Total	8,516

(Source: RSUQ No. 569 dated 6 March, 1996 by A.P.K. Jogi and S.S. Surjewala)

Government Statement On Central Assistance for Enforcing Prohibition

The Tenth Finance Commission (TFC) in its report (for 1995-2000) submitted to the Government of India in November, 1994 has indicated that it has taken note of the prohibition policy by certain States like Gujarat and Tamil Nadu and more recently by Andhra Pradesh and Orissa apart from some of the North-Eastern States. The States concerned had impressed upon the TFC the need for compensating them for the losses on this account as they had taken these measures in furtherance of the Directive Principles of the State Policy. The TFC has adjusted the base year estimated of States revenues taking into account the effect of the Prohibition policy of the State on its excise revenues and made projections on that basis. The recommendations of the TFC have been accepted by the Government....

There is no commitment to provide any further Central Support for implementing total prohibition in Andhra Pradesh at present.

(Source: LSUQ No. 402 dated 29 February, 1996 by N.J. Rathva and R.K. Konathala)

US State Department: State of Human Rights, 1995

(Relevant Extracts)

... There continue to be significant human rights abuses, despite extensive constitutional and statutory safeguards. Many of these abuses are generated by intense social tensions, violent secessionist movements and the authorities' attempts to repress them, and deficient police methods and training. These problems are acute in Kashmir, where the judicial system has been disrupted both by terrorist threats, including the assassination of judges and witnesses, and by judicial tolerance of the Government's heavy handed anti-militant tactics.

Serious human rights abuses include: extrajudicial executions and other political killings, torture and excessive use of force by security forces and separatist militants, as well as kidnapping and extortion by militants, in Kashmir and North-east India; torture, rape, and deaths of suspects in police custody throughout India; arbitrary arrest and incommunicado detention in Kashmir and the North-east; continued detention throughout the country of thousands arrested under special security legislation; long trial delays; widespread intercaste and communal violence; legal and societal discrimination as well as extensive violence, both societal and by police and other agents of government, against women; discrimination and violence against indigenous people; and widespread exploitation of indentured, bonded, and child labour.

During 1995 India made significant progress in resolving human rights problems. The Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA), special security legislation under which thousands of persons had been held for prolonged periods without charges, was allowed to lapse. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Government reached an agreement to permit prison visits in Kashmir. The ICRC made its first visits to prisoners in October.

In Punjab, the insurgent violence of past years has largely disappeared, and there is visible progress in correcting patterns of abuse by police. The assassination of the Punjab Chief Minister at the end of August, an isolated exception to restored civil peace in the state, resulted in neither a widespread crackdown nor a breakdown of order. The National Human Rights Commission continues to play a useful role in addressing patterns of abuse, as well as specific abuses, and is consolidating an attitudinal shift towards acknowledgement of human rights problems as it seeks to create a "human rights culture" through educational programs.

Political and Other Extrajudicial Killing

Political killings by both government forces and insurgents continued at a high rate in the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the seven northeastern states, where

separatist insurgencies continued. Extrajudicial killings of suspected militants by security forces in Kashmir continued at a high level, but some credible observers believed that they had declined somewhat compared with previous years. Still, human rights groups consider credible reports that dozens of such killings occur every month. Typically, those killed were detained by security forces, and their bodies, bearing multiple bullet wounds and often marks of torture were returned to relatives of were otherwise discovered the same day or a few days later. Well-documented evidence to corroborate individual cases or quantify trends is lacking. Nevertheless, press reports and anecdotal evidence leave no doubt that the pattern exists. Security forces claim that these killings, when they are acknowledged, occur in armed encounters with militants.

Terrorists attacks accounted for hundreds of deaths. As in the past, Kashmiri militant groups carried out politically motivated killings on a wide scale, targeting progovernment politicians, government officials, alleged police informers, civilians, members of rival factions, and non-political community leaders who dared call for an end to violence in the state. The total number of deaths in Kashmir remained very close to 1994's toll. Reliable press reports indicate that 1050 civilians, 202 security force personnel and 1308 militants died in insurgency-related violence in Kashmir. ...

While extrajudicial killings continued in areas buffeted by separatist insurgencies, the press and judiciary continued to give attention to deaths in police custody and faked encounter killings elsewhere in India. Such deaths probably numbered 100 to 200 in 1995. In April, the Supreme Court ordered prosecution of five Punjab policemen accused of the murder of a couple in Calcutta 2 years earlier. Charges were brought against police in Uttar Pradesh in the case of a youth who died after being beaten in custody. In Delhi, 6 policemen were suspended and one arrested on charges related to the death in custody of Rajesh Montoo Suresh. ...

The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act prohibits the establishment of organizations that promote communal hatred. The Government used this Act to prohibit two organizations, one Hindu and one Muslim, after Hindus destroyed a mosque in Ayodhya in December 1992. The ban on the Hindu organization was lifted following a judicial decision in June, however, and the authorities have not rigorously enforced the ban. Srinagar and other parts of Jammu and Kashmir were under sporadic curfew during much of the year.

Freedom of Religion

India is a secular state in which all faiths generally enjoy freedom of worship. Government policy does not favour any religious group. There is no national law to

bar proselytizing by Indian Christians. Foreign missionaries can generally renew their visas but since the mid-1960's the Government has refused to admit new resident foreign missionaries. Those who arrive now do so as tourists and stay for short periods. As of January 1993, there were 1,923 registered foreign Christian missionaries in India. As in the past, state officials refused to issue permits for foreign Christian missionaries to enter some northeastern states. Tensions between Hindus and Muslims continue to pose a challenge to the secular foundation of the state. ...

Although India is not a signatory to the U.N.

Convention and Protocol on Refugees, the Government follows its general principles and has, on the whole, maintained an excellent record of receiving and caring for refugees. The Government recognizes certain groups including Chakmas from Bangladesh and Tamils from Sri Lanka as refugees by providing assistance in refugee camps or in resettlement areas, as in the case of Tibetans. The Government neither deports Afghans, Burmese, and other nationalities nor recognizes them as refugees. Instead these people receive renewable residence permits and are recognized as refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or are ignored.

Government Attitude Regarding International and Non-governmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

... The Government appointed a National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in October 1993 with powers to investigate and recommend policy changes, punishment and compensation in cases of police abuse. In addition, the NHRC is directed to contribute to the establishment, growth, and functioning of non-governmental human rights organizations. The Government appoints the members and finances the operations of the NHRC. Although the NHRC is prohibited by statute from directly investigating allegations of abuse involving army and paramilitary forces, the Commission has made effective use of indirect inquiries to address abuses by the armed forces. During the 1994-95 Indian fiscal year, the NHRC received 6,835 complaints of human rights abuses, as well as 152 cases of custodial death or rape. At the end of the fiscal year, 2,483 cases had been dismissed, 1,563 disposed of "with directions", 276 concluded, and 1,384 remained pending.

In a February 20 letter addressed to every Member of Parliament, Commission Chairman Justice Ranganath Misra strongly urged that the Terrorism and Disruptive Practices Act (TADA) be allowed to lapse when it expired in May. This letter contributed substantially to the decision to let TADA lapse and to subsequent debate in which Parliament failed to approve successor legislation. ...

Discrimination Based on Race, Sex Religion, Disability, Language, or Social Status

The traditional caste system as well as differences of ethnicity, religion, and language deeply divide Indian society. Despite laws designed to prevent discrimination, there are other laws as well as social and cultural practices that have a profound discriminatory impact. ...

Religious Minorities

Controversy between Hindus and Muslims continues with regard to three sites where mosques were built centuries ago on sites where temples are believed to have previously stood. The potential for renewed Hindu-Muslim violence remains high.

The Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act

makes it an offense to use any religious site for political purposes or to use temples for harbouring persons accused or convicted of crime. While specifically designed to deal with Sikh places of worship in the Punjab, the law applies to all religious sites. At the outset of the Kashmir insurgency in 1990, fear of political violence drove most Hindus in the Kashmir Valley (the Pandits) to seek refuge in camps in Jammu or with relatives in New Delhi or elsewhere. The Pandit community criticizes the Government for bleak conditions in the camps and fears that a negotiated solution giving greater autonomy to the Muslim majority might threaten its own survival in Kashmir as a culturally and historically distinctive group.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

The Constitution gives the President authority to specify historically disadvantaged castes and tribes which are entitled to affirmative action in employment and other benefits. These so-called "scheduled" tribes and castes benefit from special development funds, government hiring quotas, and special training programs. A national commission investigates specific complaints about deprivation of the rights of scheduled castes and tribes and submits an annual report.

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989 specifies new offenses against disadvantaged people and provides stiffer penalties for offenders. However, this law has had only a modest effect in curbing abuse. Government statistics indicate that 10,005 cases of abuse were committed against members of scheduled castes and tribes from January through May, as compared with 38,912 in all of 1994. The national commission is charged with giving special attention to the problems of these minorities.

The practice of untouchability was in theory outlawed by the Constitution and the 1955 Civil Rights Act, but it remains an important aspect of life in India. Intercaste violence claims hundreds of lives each year. ...

RSS: Address of H.V. Seshadri, 8 March, 1996

... The Sangh Shiksha Vargas held during last year registered a normal participation of the trainees and the highest ever for the 3rd year at Nagpur. The figures are: 1st year: 10,387; 2nd year 3,762; 3rd year: 1,136. The sevakaryas under the Seva Vibhag number about 7,000. Inclusive of the service projects being run by various sister organisations initiated by swayamsevak, the total is more than 20,000. ...

"Speak Samskrit" Campaign

Of late, the "Speak Samskrit" campaign is fast catching up in several parts of our country. The full-time sevavratīs responding to the call of "Samskrit Bharati" are given intense 40-days' training... In Kashi... during December to April and in Delhi during September last year, over 1000 camps... were held... (with) participation by about 40,000 trainees each

Vishwa Sangh Shibir

The seven-day long Vishwa Sangh Shibir held... at Kayavarohan near Vadodara in Gujarat in the last week of December 1995 presented in a miniature form the unfolding of the vishwa roopa of Sangh. The participants, both male and female... numbering 377, were drawn from 26 countries of all the five organisational regions of the world...

The Supreme Court's clear confirmation of its previous pronouncements elucidating the true national connotation of Hindutva has indeed rendered a signal service in clearing many cobwebs of confusion and willful distortion of that true concept by interested politicians and journalists. It is obvious that, for the same reason, the historic verdict should have sent shock waves among them. The Sangh is happy that the verdict has vindicated what it has always been propounding as the genuine concept of our nationhood.

The quashing of the second ban on Vishwa Hindu Parishad by the Tribunal... has once again exposed the pernicious anti-Hindu attitude of the ruling party at the Centre. ... The adverse remarks passed by the judge against the Government while acquitting Sadhvi Ritambhara of all charges is one more... pointer.

The refusal of the Central and non-BJP State Governments to ban cow-slaughter for carrying out the constitutional mandate of cow-protection, with an eye on the Muslim vote-bank, has resulted in the rapid depletion of our cattle wealth... Granting of permission for putting up huge mechanized slaughterhouses... is a direct affront to the 900 million strong Hindu people... And all this goes on to satiate the appetite of anti-Hindu elements in our country and Islamic countries abroad...

... The prompt and welcome steps taken the three BJP-ruled States of Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Shiv Sena-BJP ruled Maharashtra, in banning cow-slaughter and transportation of cattle from their States need to be

commended...

... What with the Pakistani ISI spreading its subversive tentacles all over the country, smuggling huge quantities of deadly arms and ammunition right from Kashmir and Delhi to Kerala and Gujarat to Assam, besides keeping the Kashmir cauldron boiling, and the continued Bangladeshi Muslims' infiltration into most parts of the country, we can easily surmise the gravity of the impending threats... to our internal peace and security and to our territorial sovereignty.

... The Church lobby has become more aggressive in hotting up the political climate for securing reservations for Christian-converts also... The demand is motivated by the nefarious aim of removing the blockage in the form of non-reservation for the Christian-converts thus opening the flood-gates for the conversion of our weaker sections. It is the duty of the Hindu people to warn the political parties that their support to such an anti-Hindu measure would prove very costly to them in elections.

The descending curve of Hindu population... in contrast to the rising curve of Muslim population in our country has been shockingly revealed in the 1991 census. ... Enforcing family planning among all sections of citizens through every possible legislative sanction, blocking with a stern hand the ever growing Bangladeshi Muslims' infiltration and taking effective steps to throw out all such foreign... elements back to Bangladesh, legislating of a common civil code - all such measures need to be urgently initiated. A great responsibility rests on the sober and nationalist sections among Muslims. They need to raise their voice against the fanatic fringe of Muslim leadership whose provocative voice continues to hold sway over their masses and turn the popular psyche in the right direction. ...

It is ... clear that all these destructive tendencies and forces have their source in the present-day perverted political field drained of its real cultural content of Hindutva...

... An onerous responsibility devolves on the awakened sections of Hindus in general and Hindutva workers in particular, with regard to the forthcoming elections to the Lok Sabha. They will have to strive their utmost to rouse the voters to their national duty of electing such parties and persons who have proved by their past history that they stand firmly committed to tackling the above-mentioned problems and dangers on a priority basis.

... The final and the only guarantee for ensuring the security and sovereignty of our country as also the harmonious and highly moral and cultural fabric of social life... lies in the patriotically inspired and organised state of the entire Hindu society embracing all its sections...

(Source: The organiser, 17 March, 1996)

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Bajrang Dal: National Campaign for Cow Protection

The first National Convention of the Bajrang Dal, the youth wing of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), was held at Prayag on January 20, 1995. More than 1.5 lakh activists undertook a pledge for the protection of the cow. The highlight of the Convention was a solemn declaration by the delegates that neither the cow will be allowed to be slaughtered nor the country will be allowed to be disintegrated.

... The president, Shri Jaybhan Singh Pavaiya said... the companions of Babur were given a fitting lesson while a similar lesson would be taught this time to those who are slaughtering the cows... The cow protection movement has been active since 1857. All kinds of attempts from appeals to indefinite fasts were made by ... Gandhi, Dayanand, Lal-Bal-Pal, Aurobindo and other patriotic national leaders. However, nothing happened!... The Constitution has adequate provision to protect the cow and it forms an important agenda of the directive principles for Gram Panchayat also. He added that all kinds of efforts and rules proved useless because of the appeasement policy of the governments which were looking at the block votes of the so-called minorities...

The Bajrang Dal chief called upon the Hindu youths to install such a government at the centre that would ban the slaughter of the Gomatha (by) enacting a central law...

In an unanimous resolution...the Bajrang Dal has declared that it would launch a gigantic drive from March 20, for the protection of cow... Acharya Dharmendra, Ashok Singhal, Acharya Giriraj Kishore and the Secretary General of the Bajrang Dal, Shri Surendra Jain also addressed the Convention (which) was inaugurated by Jagadguru Shankaracharya Vasudevanand Saraswati...

(Source: The Organiser, 25 February, 1996)

Religion preaches that the way to truth is service and science provides us the means to do so.

- Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma,
President of India

The world must realize that the Government which has been so brutal and ruthless against my family would be doing worse things to the common Mohajirs, MQM leaders and its workers.

Altaf Hussain,
MQM Leader

Thoughts of Abul Kalam Azad

"If an angel were to descend from the high heavens and proclaim from the height of the Qutub Minar, 'Discard Hindu-Muslim Unity and within 24 hours Swaraj is yours,' I will refuse the proffered Swaraj, but will not budge an inch from my stand. The refusal of Swaraj will affect only India, while the end of our unity will be the loss of the entire human world."

Congress Presidential Address, Delhi, 1923

"I am a Muslim and profoundly conscious of the fact that I have Islam's glorious tradition of the last thirteen hundred years. I am not prepared to lose even a small part of that legacy... I am equally proud of the fact that I am an Indian, an essential part of the indivisible unity of Indian nationhood..."

Congress Presidential Address, Ramgarh, 1940

"The two-nation theory was the death-knell of a life of faith and belief... you will see that those on whom you rely for support will have forsaken you and left you helpless at the mercy of fate."

Speech in Jama Masjid, Delhi, 1947

Tributes to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

"We have had great men and we shall have great men; but ... that peculiar and special type of greatness that Maulana Azad represented is not likely to be reproduced in India or anywhere else."

- Jawaharlal Nehru, Lok Sabha, 24 February, 1958

"The greatest service which the Maulana did was to teach people of every religion that there are two aspects of religion. One separates and differentiates and creates hatred. This is the false aspect. The other, the true spirit of religion brings people together; it creates understanding. It lies in the spirit of service, in sacrificing self for others. It implies belief in unity, in the essential unity of things."

- Zakir Husain, 23 February, 1958

Government Statement on Manuscripts of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

A preliminary check of the collection has been done and it has been found that all personal papers and manuscripts of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad are physically there in the ICCR library. However, five manuscripts of works by other authors from the collection have not been located in the designated section. The details are:

1. Kulliyat-e-Sadi of Sadi Mushihuddin
2. Diwan Brahman
3. Diwan Shahi Sabzrate
4. Diwan Nizam
5. Diwan Frishta M. Quasim

Steps have been taken to trace the documents.

ICCR has separately undertaken a programme for lamination of rare works from the Maulana Azad collection and will also commence a programme of microfilming... for the preservation of these books and papers.

(Source: LSUQ No. 1172 dated 11.3.1996 by S.P. Yadav and G. Devi)

Government Statements

On Taj Mahal

According to the report of the expert committee set up under the directions of the Supreme Court, the Taj Mahal is structurally sound and stable. The main materials of brick and lime mortar of the structure are in good condition and have not been affected. Steps taken by the Government to conserve the Taj Mahal include the following:

1. A trapezium surrounding the Taj Mahal has been demarcated. No new polluting industry is allowed to be set up in this area.
2. There is a ban on the use of furnace oil and diesel generators in industries in Agra. The foundries are not permitted to operate during winter nights.
3. Continuous sulphur dioxide monitoring stations have been maintained downwind of the Mathura Refinery towards the Taj Mahal and monitor the trend of sulphur dioxide and oxides of nitrogen concentrations in the ambient air.
4. The Mathura Refinery has planned a number of steps, adoption of hydrocracker, to continuously bring down its sulphur dioxide emissions.
5. A network of ambient air quality monitoring stations has been set up and operated in Agra by the U.P. Pollution Control Board.
6. The recommendations of the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute on the steps to protect the Taj Mahal have been forwarded to the sectoral Ministries i.e. the Ministries of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Surface Transport, Power, Archaeological Survey of India, and the Government of U.P. for implementation.
7. The foundries have been directed to adopt the divided blast system in their cupolas to cut down their emissions.
8. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has initiated a ten point package programme to save Taj Mahal from the effects of air

pollution.

9. The Hon'ble Supreme Court vide its Order dated 11.4.1994 has directed the Ministry of Environment and Forests for setting up of a Special Cell for the purpose of developing green belt around the Taj Mahal, as suggested by NEERI in its report. This Ministry has set up a Special Cell for implementation of the green belt development plan.

The writ petition (civil) NO. 13381 of 1984 regarding the preservation of the Taj Mahal called for first hearing by the Supreme Court in January 1993. Thereafter, various orders have been issued by the court. The Government have responded and conformed to the court orders, these include:

- i) Constituting a special cell for implementation of a green belt development plan around the Taj Mahal.
- ii) Constituting of an expert committee on Atmospheric Environment quality and Preservation of Taj Mahal and Agra Monuments.
- iii) Filing a positive response regarding relocation of industries in the Agra Mathura region.

(Source: LSUQ No. 1433 dated 12 March, 1996 by V. Pawar)

On Preservation of Taj Mahal

The Asian Development Bank have approved a technical assistance to provide a comprehensive assessment of the current environmental situation in the Agra, Mathura, and Ferozabad districts, recommend appropriate mitigation measures for improvement, and formulate a Project for sustainable development of Agra, Mathura and Ferozabad districts with particular reference to environmental protection, energy conservation and economic and social impact.

Further course of action with respect to ADB related loan assistance will depend on the reports arising out of the above technical assistance.

(Source: LSUQ No. 1002 dated 8 March, 1996 by T. Singh & P.D. Katheria)

NATION AND THE WORLD

Nation and the World is a magazine for a cause, the cause of the underdog, the underprivileged. What the others summarily dismiss as the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backwards and the minorities, *Nation and the World* takes up cudgels on their behalf, articulates their fears, hopes and aspirations. Giving a voice to Muslims and Dalits, and helping in shaping tomorrow's world by crusading for today's oppressed.

Yet, it is no mouthpiece. In fact, it is a well rounded fortnightly, giving lucid analysis of the political, economic and social phenomena with space earmarked for those with a taste for subtle humour.

Edited By Saiyid Hamid
Former Vice Chancellor,
AMU, Aligarh

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Divine Status for Living Chief Minister

Deification of Puratchi Thalaivi, Dr. J. Jayalalitha, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, was the highlight of her 48th birthday celebrated with eclat throughout the State today by her followers and members of the ruling AIADMK.

Mr. Poovai Gnanam, district deputy secretary of the party, announced building of a Jayalalitha Temple at Poonamalee, a city suburb, on the lines of Kannagi Kottam. ... Cabinet colleagues of Ms. Jayalalitha went temple crawling. Some pulled golden chariots in temples while others rolled on the floors. A few went abegging in supplication. Most ate "man choru" (rice served on unswept ground around temples).

Ms. Sakkubai, MLA, led a bevy of members of the women's wing of the party in the nude except for cover provided by neem leaves instead of the proverbial fig leaves to worship at the Vempuliamman temple in Thiruvellore, about 30 km from here, much to the delight of the cameraman.

At the Samayapuram Mariamman temple, 48 cocks were sacrificed. The cock, it may be recalled, was Ms. Jayalalitha's election symbol in the 1989 polls. All female children born today were given a silver anklet each while 4,800 poor people were given free dhotis and saris. Orphans were given sweets.

At Pattiveerampatti, AIADMK intellectuals held a "pattimandram" (symposium) on the subject whether Ms. Jayalalitha was following in the footsteps of Gautama Buddha, Jesus of Nazareth or Mohammed the Prophet.

The consensus was she had imbibed the best in all three (and) that she had already ushered in Ram Rajya in Tamil Nadu.

(Source: The Statesman, 25 February, 1996)

Human Sacrifice in Saurashtra

After a lull of decades, the bizarre ritual of sacrificing human beings in the name of 'god' has again surfaced in pockets of Saurashtra. In 1995 itself, four incidents have been reported in Jamnagar, Surendranagar and Amreli districts, where the zealously religious either killed themselves or their offsprings in temples seeking divine blessings. The fifth incident occurred ... at an isolated temple in a hamlet in Jasdan taluka in Rajkot district.

A 'Shiva' devotee, Lalji Arjan Patel, sliced off his head with a specially devised guillotine in a deserted temple, as part of a gory ritual called the 'kamal puja'.

... The improvised sickle merely severed his Adam's apple, making for a slow and painful death on Mahashivratri night. Last year's incidents, which merely helped inspire awe instead of outrage in Saurashtra, were no less gory. ... In the latest instance, Lajli's body was buried in a samadhi in the fields... His father told visitors his son did not need a funeral as he had not died... (He left) behind his 24-year-old wife and three young children.

Cow Fat in Chewing Gum

All India Cow Protection Council Secretary Suresh Gupta... alleges that beef and cow fat was being added to the chewing gums and toffees manufactured by Pepsi Foods.

... The Council would launch a nationwide awareness campaign against these food items... (and) to demand a blanket ban on cow slaughter and the export of beef...

8-Month-Old Killed to Appease Peer

In a bizarre case of child sacrifice, Mohan Sargra, a youngman brutally killed his infant nephew at village Samatipur in Jalore district in Rajasthan, on 2nd October, 1995.

... Sargra... was said to be in possession of a deity... After killing his nephew, he took out a knife and cut his body to taste his flesh and to drink his blood... 22-year-old Mohan... was observing fast during navratras to please the Gopapeer, a miracle god, worshipped in western parts of Rajasthan.

Sons Preferred in Punjab and Haryana

... Statistics in "The Progress of Indian States", a 1995 report produced by UNICEF indicate that the fewest number of girls compared to boys are in the two North Indian States of Punjab and Haryana.

Of the country's 10 districts which the lowest child sex ratio, 8 are in Punjab and Haryana. Paradoxically, these are the two richest states in the country.

Preference for sons over daughters is not new in North India, nor are its gruesome manifestations. British administrators had mentioned the practice of female infanticide in Punjab in the Gazetteer of 1911.

Today, sex determination tests followed by abortion of female foetuses have sharpened the tools of patriarchy.

... Predictably the two states have among India's lowest female-to-male ratios: 87.4 women to 100 men in Haryana and 88 women for every 100 men in Punjab. ...

(Source: The Pioneer, 17 January, 1996)

A View on Haj Subsidy

... Giving doles in the name of Haj subsidy is certainly not permissible. The Hajis are advised not to accept any subsidy and if it is forced on them they should give it away to some charitable institution and thus protect the sanctity of their Haj.

There is another aspect to it. The unsolicited amount of Rs. 40 crores is spent on 0.04 per cent of the Muslims of India, who are otherwise well to do to go to Haj by air at their own cost. Such a huge amount ... to be spent on a microscopic percentage of the population is ridiculous. It neither helps the giver nor the receiver. Also (the subsidy) is not a one-time... but recurring annual payment...

(Source: The Hindu, 30 March, 1996)

US: Muslim Sportsman's Gesture of Protest

A leading basketball player who converted to Islam in 1991 has been suspended for refusing to stand for the ... national anthem. The high-profile clash has gone beyond sport and has illustrated the widening gulf between Islam and American patriotism.

Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf, a star guard with the Denver Nuggets who went under the name of Chris Jackson before he changed faith, said that the American flag was "a symbol of oppression", of tyranny". He refused to stand for the pre-match anthem, played at games organized by the National Basketball Association...

"My beliefs are more important", said Abdul-Rauf, who earns \$2.6 million a year and will forgo dollars 31,707 for each game during his suspension. "My duty is to my creator, not to nationalistic ideology"...

"This country has a long history of oppression and tyranny", he added... "... You can't be for God and oppression... I don't criticize those who stand, so don't criticize me for sitting". His fellow players are divided. Some, such as top star Shaquille O'Neal of Orlando, said that "people have different beliefs and should respect that "it isn't dishonourable"...

A leading member of the American Legion said the player's behaviour was "tantamount to treason"...

For basketball's many fans in the U.S. heartlands, Abdul-Rauf's anti-Americanism is perplexing. To them, the national anthem is an upbeat, feel-good hymn to freedom and national identity.

With so many basketball players being black, there are evocative reminders of Muhammad Ali's refusal to serve in the military during the Vietnam War on account of his Muslim faith, and of the medal-winning U.S. athletes at the Mexico Olympics who gave black power salutes during the playing of the American national anthem. In some city suburbs, nurseries of discontent, Abdul-Rauf's action resonates with young blacks who feel that the American dream has passed them by. These are the same people courted by Louis Farrakhan, the Muslim demagogue... made speeches criticizing America.

The basketball association said Abdul-Rauf will remain suspended until he agrees to stand for the national anthem. If he misses the rest of the season, he will be dollars 665,000 worse off. (Source: The Times, London).

(Contd. from page 164)

votes were in a majority...

The important question now is what the Muslims are going to do in the future. Will they repeat one or the other of the three previous experiments which have already failed, in the hope that the future may hold something different in store for them? Or will they try to chalk out a fourth course different from all the three that have already failed to deliver the goods?

Pakistan: Double Vote for Minorities

The... Pakistan cabinet meeting on February 26, 1996 took a major decision to provide the religious minorities with the right to cast their vote for members of the country's 217-seat National Assembly... besides voting separately for candidates contesting the 10 parliamentary seats reserved for the minorities (4 Hindus, 4 Sikhs, 2 others).

The move has evoked mixed reaction from... the country... Qazi Hussain Ahmed, Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami, Pakistan, criticising the government for taking such a move maintained: "This is tantamount to an attack on the ideological foundations of the country... The dual voting right for minorities is a step towards secularization of the country"...

Reaction in Pakistan

The Deeni Mahaz (religious bodies' front) in the Senate and the Milli Yekjehati Council have opposed the move and have threatened to launch a countrywide agitation against the proposed reforms....

... Z.A. Suleri, in a front-page analysis in News (6/3), observes: "Separate electorate are the foundation head from which sprang the concept of Muslim nationhood and provided the basis for the demand of Pakistan... In plain words, joint electorate is a ruse to stifle the voice of Islam. This is an American agenda. The PPP is sure to benefit from it, but at what cost?"

Some opposition groups have particularly pointed out that Benazir wants votes of Qadianis who have been declared non-Muslims. But the Minorities have generally welcomed the dual vote which they hope will influence policy planning of political parties who will have to reckon the votes of minorities for winning elections.

(Source: The Radiance Viewsweekly, 17 March, 1996 and The Organiser, 31 March, 1996)

Government Statement

On Rocket Attack on Masjid in POK New Delhi, 30 January, 1996

Pakistan('s)... campaign to attribute the rocket attack on a mosque in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to India... is a false allegation which the spokesman of the Ministry of Defence has totally rejected...

... We ... can never resort to an action as despicable as targeting innocent people offering Namaz in a mosque.

Pakistan has become a haven for terrorists... Instead of holding India responsible for this tragedy, Pakistan should look within itself.

Chronology of the Month

(15 February - 15 March, 1995)

NATIONAL POLITICS

Constitutional Reform:

*Former P.M. V.P. Singh suggests introduction of the Presidential System (15 Mar). *Supreme Court begins review of its judgement in the Hindutva case (15 Mar).

Corruption:

*Hawala Case monopolises headlines. Special Court dismisses L.K. Advani's application seeking rejection of CBI's chargesheet (17 Feb). Textile Minister Kamal Nath resigns (19 Feb). CBI chargesheets three Ministers R.K. Dhawan, Kamal Nath and Buta Singh (19 Feb). Dhawan resigns (21 Feb). C.K. Jaffer Sharief, Buta Singh, K. Natwar Singh and Kamal Nath granted bail (14 Mar).

*Delhi H.C. takes up Mandal pay-off case (23 Feb).

*On Bihar Animal Husbandry Case, Bihar Congress demands resignation of C.M. Laloo Prasad (2 Mar). Bihar Congress demands imposition of President's Rule in Bihar. Advani demands resignation of Bihar's C.M. following Patna H.C.'s directive to CBI to undertake probe (13 Mar).

*BJP demands declaration of assets by PM Narasimha Rao (14 Mar).

Rajya Sabha Elections:

*Home Minister Chavan, Power Minister Salve and JD Leader Hegde among those elected in biennial elections; Out of 57 seats, Congress wins 20 and BJP and JD 8 each (19 Feb).

Congress(I):

*Cong.(I)'s electoral strategy directed at regaining Muslim support through meetings of Congress, leaders with Ulema as well as public 'apologies' by senior leaders like Ghulam Nabi Azad, Maurya & Antulay (16 Feb). *PM launches campaign in his Constituency Nandyal with slogan "You give me stability, I will give you prosperity".

Janata Parivar:

*V.P. Singh announces three-year withdrawal from electoral politics (12 Mar), continues to guide Janata Dal and works for formation of Third Force.

*R.V. Paswan predicts unity of secular forces immediately on announcement of elections (14 Mar).

*SP Leader Mulayam Singh and JD President Laloo Prasad Yadav hold secret talks in Lucknow (19 Feb).

*JD rules out alliance with BSP and pleads for Left-JD-SP Front (2 Mar).

*BSP leaders reiterates no alliance with JD or SP (11 Mar). Kanshi Ram declares intention to go on his own and contest 200 seats (11 Mar).

*CPI expresses doubts about the emergence of a third front (17 Feb).

Left Front:

*CPI and CPI(M) finalise seats and Constituencies.

*CPI(ML) calls for Left unity (21 Mar).

Sangh Parivar:

*L.K. Advani launches Rath Yatra from Kochi (9 Mar). Advani highlights infiltration, Kashmir insurgency and corruption as main theme in the Yatra (11 Mar).

*RSS meets in Lucknow; stresses Hindutva ideology; calls upon front organisations to back Hindutva parties;

desists from attacking PM Rao and thus keeps option open for post-electoral understanding (3-10 Mar).

*BJP persists in attacking PM in Parliament and outside, on corruption, law and order, new economic policies, inflation, Kashmir and infiltration (23 Feb).

*Public Rally in Bombay to observe one year of Shiv Sena-BJP Government flops (15 Mar).

*Sangh Parivar decides to launch cow protection campaign from 20 March with Bajrang Dal as cutting edge (1 Mar).

*BJP negotiates with both SJP and HVP for electoral alliance in Haryana (22 Feb).

*Samata Party (Fernandes) decides to merge with SJP (15 Mar).

*Akali Dal (Badal) proposes 'federal package' (23 Feb); negotiates with BJP but denies communal character (23 Feb).

Muslim Politics:

*Muslim scholar Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi sees Governor Vora and ex-PM V.P. Singh (11 Mar); had earlier meet P.M. Rao. *Seminar in New Delhi on Maulana Abul Kalam Azad- 'Contemporary Relevance' features Congress and non-Congress Muslim leaders. Maurya wants Muslims to use votes wisely to protect secular and democratic values.

*Shahabuddin boycotts Bhondsi Conclave convened among others by RSS Leader Govindacharya who sees merit in Shahabuddin's compulsion definition of 'minorities' and measures for their protection at various levels. *Shahabuddin's article on "Muslim Fanaticism and the New World Order" generates surprise among secular intelligentsia and attacks by some fanatics.

KASHMIR SITUATION

*Government extends ban on JKLF (17 Feb). *Seminar on Sub-Nationalism in India convened by Left groups supports Kashmir case (18 Feb). *RSS demands military action in Kashmir (10 Mar). *Hurriyat holds rallies in Valley against bilateral talks between insurgents and Government (16 Feb). Government invites 4 militant leaders for unconditional talks; NC Leader Farooq Abdullah welcomes initiative (13 Mar). BJP opposes talks (14 Mar). First dialogue held.

*H.M. Chavan reiterates invitation to unconditional to Hurriyat; Militants agree to cooperate in ending gun-culture and hints at participation in elections. Valley observes total bandh (15 Mar).

*National Conference demands settlement before poll (23 Feb). Militant outfit, Muslim Mujahideen supports election (11 Mar).

*Notices serves on Hurriyat leaders under FCRA and Income Tax Act (25 Feb). 43 political and religious leaders asked to furnish details of foreign contribution in context of Hawala scandal (3 Mar).

Insurgency:

*Government confirms 1312 militants killed during past six months, 1537 apprehended and 550 surrendered (7 Mar). *Harkat-ul-Ansar chief Javid Ahmed killed (18 Feb). *Situation deteriorates in Doda; troops rushed (26 Feb). *Hizbul Mujahideen agents apprehended in Delhi

(13 Mar). *Al-Buraq chief Md. Akram arrested (14 Mar). *Eminent Lawyer and Human Rights Activist Jalil Andrabi reported missing since 9 March after alleged arrest by security forces; causes sharp international reaction. *Govt. announces 24-hour unilateral cease-fire for Id-ul-Fitr (20 Feb). *Internal wrangling among militant groups lead to repeated exchanges and even attacks on leaders like Yaseen Malik and Shabbir Shah. Attacks on Lone attributed to security forces. Shabbir Shah launches sits in protest dharna, arrested twice (8-11 Mar). *State Govt. denies allegation of violation of human rights.

*US State Deptt. in its Annual Report alleges continuing violation of human rights including political killings by security forces and insurgents (7 Mar).

Pakistan's Stand:

*President Leghari takes public stand against independence (13 Mar), rejects proposal for putting Kashmir under U.N. Trust or U.S. umbrella.

International Reaction:

*Sri Lanka supports bilateral talks on the basis of Simla Agreement (27 Feb).

OTHER MATTERS OF CONCERN

Reservation:

*Association for Promoting Education and Employment of Muslims holds Second National Convention and adopts resolution demanding reservation quota in employment and higher education based on population and level of backwardness (2 Mar). *A.I. Muslim Backward Classes Federation demands separate quota for Backward Class Muslims (2 Mar). *Government agrees to include Moplahas in OBC list for Kerala. *Catholic Bishops Conference demands benefit of reservation for Dalit Christians. Feels cheated at non-passage of promised bill and expresses loss of confidence in Government's assurance (13 Mar). *Delhi H.C. scraps reservation quota for PG Courses at AIIMS. *Minority Commission holds meeting with banks and financial institutions to facilitate credit flow to minorities.

Communal Violence:

*PUCL and other organisations hold dharna in Delhi for revival of Sri Krishna Commission of Inquiry in Bombay Riots, matter raised in Parliament, Home Minister Chavan considers scrapping a mistake and offers to facilitate establishment of branch of National Minorities Commission in Bombay.

*Later Chavan threatens to set a new Commission, if Sri Krishna Commission not revived (10 Mar). Supreme Court directs Bombay H.C. to hear petition against scrapping Commission (12 Mar).

*Petition against withdrawal of cases against Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray dismissed by Bombay H.C. on technical grounds.

*Former Minister H.K.L. Bhagat remains in judicial custody on charge of involvement in anti-Sikh riots in 1984 (16 Feb). Delhi H.C. confirms life term against 3 persons for these riots.

*Minor communal incidents reported from Saharanpur (UP), Baghpat (UP), Kolar (Karnataka), Madurai (Tamil Nadu) and Ahmedabad (Gujarat).

Human Rights:

*SC asks CBI to prosecute 27 Punjab Policemen for fake encounter.

*National Human Rights Commission urges Home Ministry to separate investigative wing of police force and include course on human rights in training programme (3 Mar).

Education:

*Meeting of Muslim educational organisation in Delhi decides to form an A.I. Advisory Council (2 Mar).

*AMU Court finally scheduled to meet on 31 March to elect Chancellor, Pro-Chancellor and members of Executive Council; AMU appoints Justice G.A. Kuchay to undertake inquiry into University affairs from 191-95. V.C. orders mass transfer of administrative staff. Staff Association expresses concern at lack of progress on matters of concern to teaching community.

Jamia Millia Islamia:

*JMI teachers launch agitation to press their demands against administration (26 Feb - 26 Mar).

Urdu:

*Tamil Nadu C.M. announces setting up Urdu Academy in Madras (20 Feb). *127th birth anniversary of Ghalib observed in Delhi (25 Feb). *Traditional Indo-Pak Mushaira held in New Delhi (16 Mar).

Monuments:

*Supreme Court halts unauthorised work in Jama Masjid Complex (14 Feb). Bukhari's agree to demolish illegal structure on or before April 8 (8 Mar).

Haj:

*Government proposes to introduce comprehensive Bill to replace the existing Act (6 Mar).

*Haj House inaugurated in Calcutta and Madras.

Imams' Salary:

*A.I. Imams Organisation rejects Wakf Council scheme and decides to approach Supreme Court again.

Communal Propaganda:

*Delhi H.C. stays Distt. Court's Order for arrest of Naib Imam Bukhari for seditious speech in January, 1993 (6 Mar).

*VHP activist Sadhvi Rithambra discharged on technical grounds by Delhi Court though charged with communal and inflammatory speeches (20 Feb).

Commemoration:

*Annual Urs of Amir Khusro completes in Delhi (11 Mar).

*Maulana Azad's statue unveiled in Parliament premises (15 Mar).

MISCELLANEOUS

Obituary:

*Eminent Scholar Maulana Abu Saud passes away in Bangalore (20 Feb). *Noted Urdu Poet Akhtar-ul-Iman dies in Bombay (9 Mar). *Noted T.V. personality Shafi Inamdar, 47, dies in Bombay (13 Mar). *Bihar MLA Muzaffar Hussain, 46, dies in Purnea (13 Mar).

Other Minorities in India and Abroad:

*Minorities Commission recommends amendment of Gurdwara Act for lowering voting age from 21 to 18 and giving representation to women.

*Canadian Supreme Court upholds the right of Sikhs to wear turban (27 Feb).

*U.S. State Deptt. issues 1995 Report on Human Rights and criticises Pakistan for reign of terror against minorities under blasphemy law (8 Mar). *Pakistan Government approves double voting right to non-Muslim minorities for general as well as reserved seats (27 Feb).